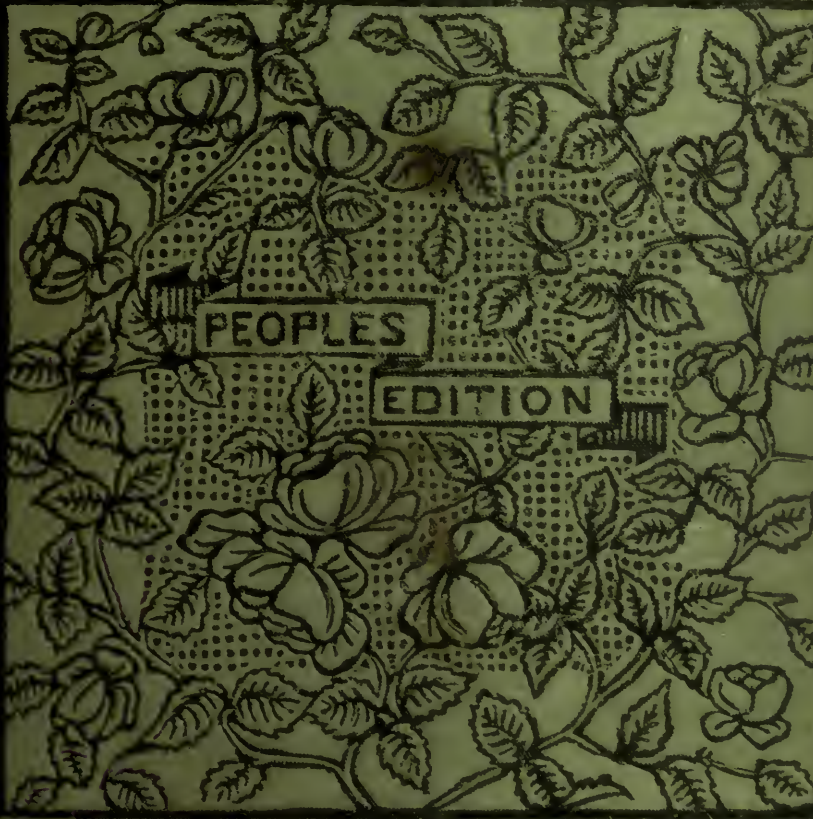




THE VIDOCO

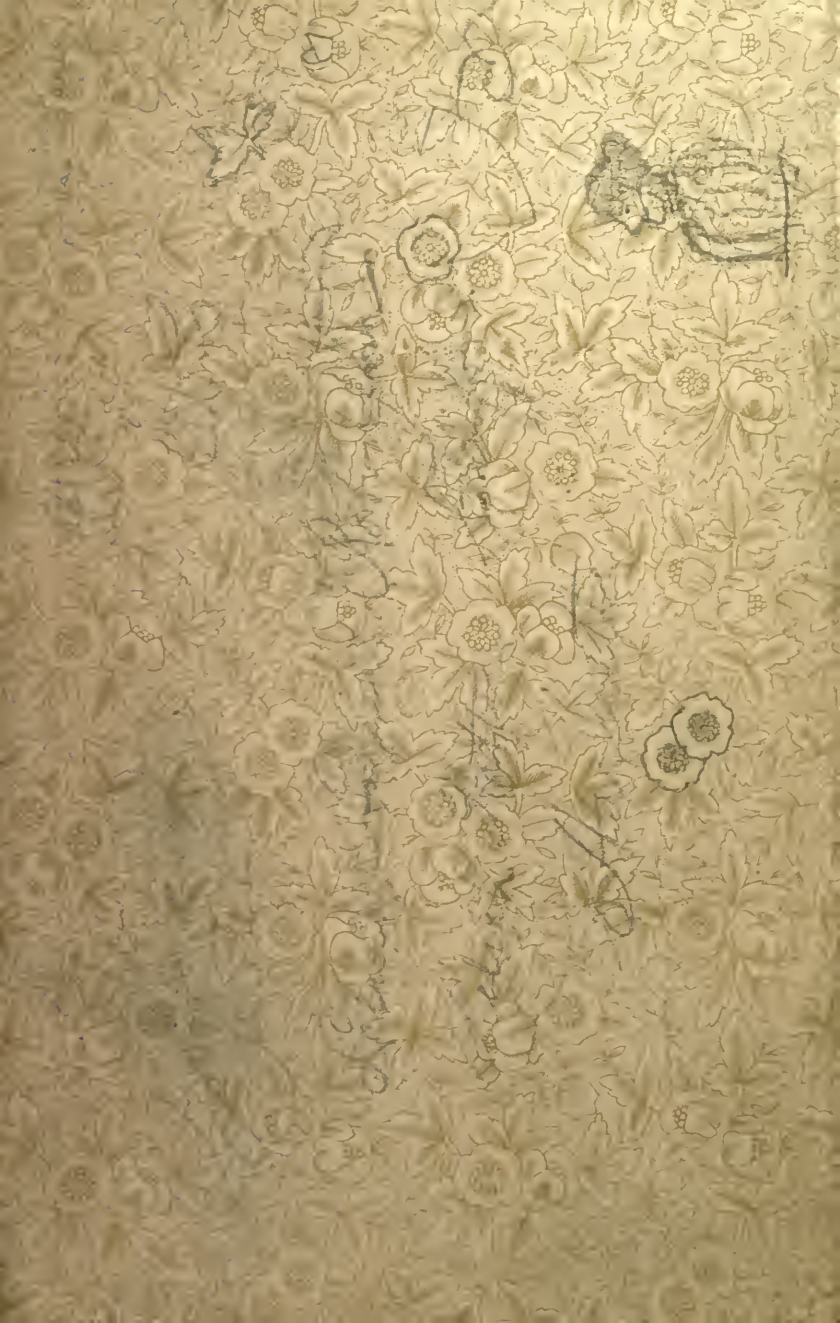


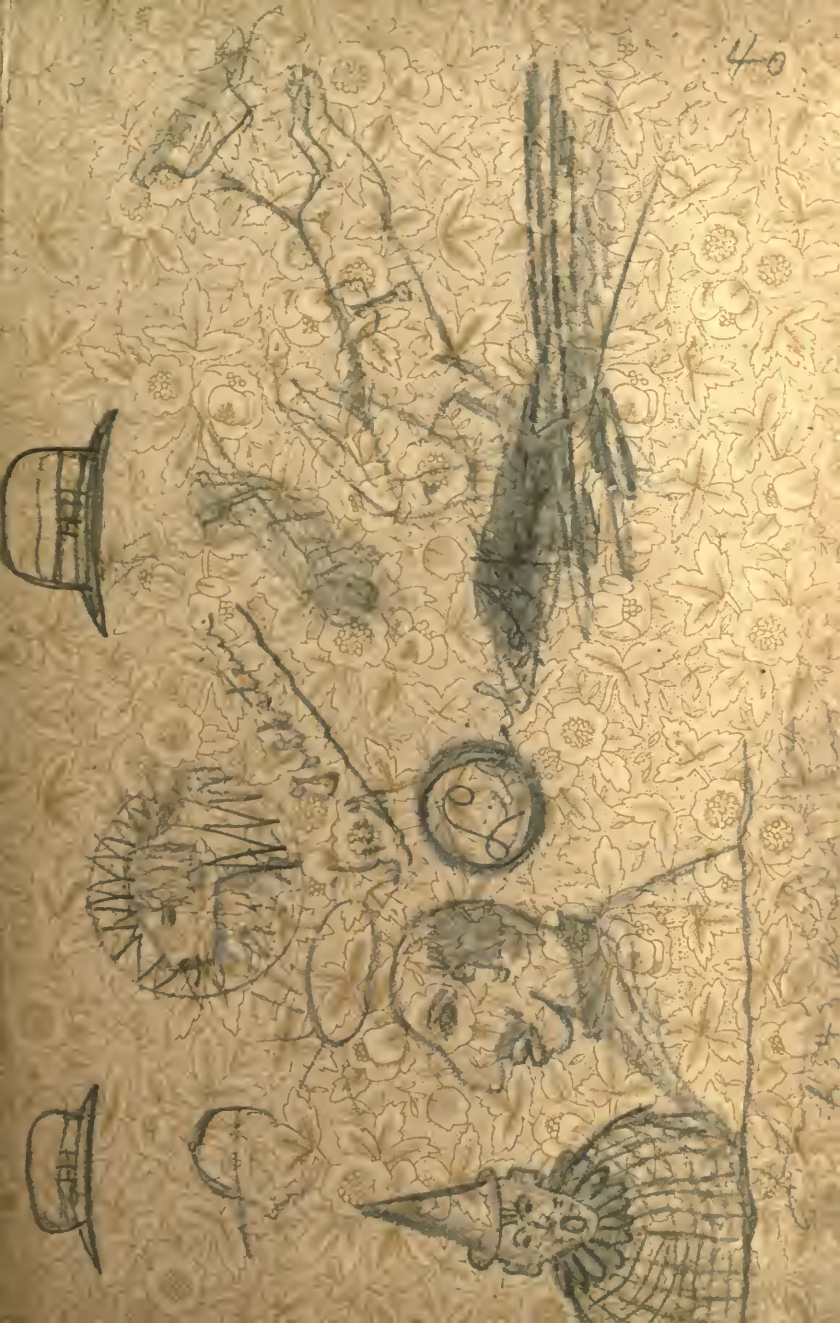
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THE VIDOCQ

OF

NEW YORK.

BY

CHANDOS FULTON,

AUTHOR OF "A SOCIETY STAR," "A BROWN STONE FRONT," ETC.

THE AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY.

1891.

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THE VIDOCQ OF NEW YORK.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

"I DON'T believe a word you say!" said Mrs. Larkspur to her husband, seated opposite at the center table in the family sitting room in their mansion on Park Avenue. "I don't believe a word you say!" she reiterated with flashing eyes and an emotion that was none the less sincere because there was an effort at suppression or control.

"I have told you the truth, and nothing but the truth," he retorted doggedly, with a show of humiliation rather than displeasure that he should be doubted. "I have simply stated facts, and your conclusions or surmises are unjust."

"How absurd! To think that a woman who could write that letter did not know you."

"That may be, and I may know her—her familiarity with the name and address and our affairs would indicate a close personal friend—but that I am carrying on any intrigue with her or know her identity I positively deny."

"I don't believe you," exclaimed the wife, unable to restrain her anger.

"H'm—What do you propose to do?"

"Go back to my father and mother!"

"I think that if you took counsel from them, you would be prepared to listen to reason."

"Ah, yes! I have no doubt you would like me to leave you and go back to them—leave you to carry on your intrigue with this vile woman."

"But I shall stipulate to be present when the statement of the case is made to them."

"You would lie to them, as to me!"

"Oh, Belle! Don't let your temper run away with you. I swear to you, by the memory of my mother and all I hold sacred, I have told you the truth, and am innocent of your insinuations."

"You had better go to her, lest she upbraid you for not being punctual," retorted the wife, tossing across the table a letter she held in her hand, and leaving the room to conceal a flood of tears.

Larkspur picked up the letter that had come to him in the mail that afternoon to his home address.

On a small, delicate, pink-tinted and violet-

scented note-sheet was the following in a lady's chirography :

“TUESDAY.

“DEAREST—I know it was your little surprise whist party that kept you from coming to me last evening, and knowing how poignant must have been your regret, I freely forgive your neglect of your promise. Don't fail to come this evening. It is ‘lodge’ night, you know; that ought to be a good excuse any time for absence, eh? Yours only and forever, MINNIE.

“Andrew Larkspur, Esq.”

This tender little epistle was not inclosed in an envelope of the same fine grade, but in an ordinary business yellow one, and the superscription was in the bold, round hand of a clerk and the “Mr.” had a flourish to the “r” that made it look like “Mrs.,” and, consequently, the wife had opened it.

“I would give a good deal to know who wrote this letter!” muttered Larkspur, who really adored his pretty, but hot-tempered wife. “Some fiend who seeks to make trouble. Some one who knows the internecine affairs of this household, that we had an impromptu card party last night, when I had no idea of going out, and that I belong to a lodge which I usually attend this evening in the week. Who it is I have not the slightest idea! I did not suppose I had an enemy in the world!”

CHAPTER II.

GONE HOME.

THE violent closing of the front door downstairs attracted his attention, and he arose to go out into the hall and look over the banister.

He met a servant maid coming upstairs.

"Mrs. Larkspur has gone to her father and mother's," said the maid.

"Alone?"

"No; she rang for a messenger boy while she was putting on her things."

"Oh!"

"She told me to tell you not to sit up for her," added the maid, with a courtesy, as she descended to rejoin her comrades below stairs.

Larkspur returned to the sitting room disconsolately.

"This is too bad! Folly!" he muttered, as he sunk into his chair.

Glancing at a portrait of his wife by Constant Mayer, on the wall opposite, he mused again, "I must rule now, or forever be dethroned."

He picked up the letter and scanned it again, comparing the writing of the inside with the address.

"If the letter were not addressed to me at the bottom I should be inclined to doubt that it was intended for me. The poison of the sting is in the superscription, the misleading address."

Lighting a cigar, he paced the apartment in meditation, finally exclaiming :

"I must get to the bottom of this!" A few vigorous puffs, a few seconds of meditation, a prolonged puff and the ejaculation :

"Byrnes!"

A strut to the chair, and dropping therein :

"Yes, Byrnes is my man : he can advise me, if not help me. He will be better than a lawyer."

Drawing toward him a little writing desk that stood on the table, he scrawled in pencil :

"This is folly. In a few days I will convince you of my innocence. Won't you come home?"

"ANDREW."

He addressed an envelope to his wife at her father's round the corner on Madison Avenue, inclosed the note and summoned a district messenger and dispatched him with it, bidding him to "wait answer."

The answer came in good time ; a verbal, laconic, "No."

"I am glad she did not take the letter with her, as I shall need it to-morrow," he muttered, putting the letter back into the envelope that inclosed it, pocketing the same as he went into his chamber adjoining, to seek in vain a night's rest—for though strong in his innocence, he was naturally much disturbed.

CHAPTER III.

THE VIDOCQ OF NEW YORK.

LARKSPUR decided to visit the marble edifice on Mulberry Street, between Prince and Bleecker Streets, known as "Police Headquarters;" and erected by the commonwealth for that purpose as far back as 1862, as stated on a monolith over the entrance.

An officer in uniform, at the door, in answer to his inquiry, directed him to the second door on the left, bearing the sign "Detective Bureau."

Thrusting open this door he found himself in an office, or rather two offices, there being a folding door between the rooms, and he could not fail to observe that all those at the desks wore uniforms.

"Inspector Byrnes?" he said.

"Through that door!" pointed an aged official at the nearest desk.

Leaving the room Larkspur found himself in a short, narrow passage way, with a door on each side and another at the end labelled "Detective Bureau," going through which he entered a large room, with tables and chairs, windows overlooking the court, and two doors, one bearing the sign "Office of Superintendent," while "Detective Bureau" was lettered on the wall beside the other.

Several well dressed and well appearing gentlemen—detectives off duty, the dark and graceful Heidelberger, the gray and rotund Farley, the reflective Schmidt, being among them—took no more notice of him than if he were not visible.

“Inspector Byrnes?”

“That way!” pointed Heidelberger.

Crossing to the door indicated Larkspur pulled it open, crossed a covered bridge or archway over the court, to an apartment that had a desk and paraphernalia suggestive of the precinct station house.

A detective had just brought in a “sneak” and was searching him—a youthful, demure man, whose harsh features indicated he was an old offender.

The detective opened his coat and neatly folded back the face on each side or shoulder; then he carefully examined all the pockets, running his hands up and down to see that nothing was concealed in the bands or suspenders.

He was looking for the skeleton key this class of criminals operate with, but so far had only found a homeopathic vial of quinine pills, a toothpick, a knife, and some small change.

A smile of triumph came in the prisoner’s face; a look of disappointment and perplexity on that of the detective.

“He threw something away when he started to run as soon as he saw me,” observed the detective, “but I can swear it was a cigar.”

The prisoner looked defiant.

The detective eyed him calculatingly. He suddenly ripped open the buttons of the prisoners trousers, and dropped them, before the prisoner divined his intention, and there poised in the crotch were four skeleton keys, two on each side—evidence sufficient to send him below to await trial in the morning.

“Well, sir,” exclaimed one of the two officials at the big desk, a white-haired, pale faced man who had evidently seen years of official duty, “well, sir?”

“Inspector Byrnes?” said Larkspur, handing him his card.

A younger official took the card and disappeared through one of two doors.

Larkspur observed one wall of the room was decorated with frames and single photographs of the various officials in the department,—those of the previous chief inspectors—Walling, Young, Keely, Irving catching his eye, as well as one of the popular Presidents of the Board of Police Commissioners, Stephen B. French.

Opposite the desk was a pyramid or nest of letter boxes, with glass doors, each bearing the name of a detective.

The attendant returned and motioned Larkspur to accompany him.

Larkspur followed him through a corridor, on each side of which were offices which he correctly divined were those of the detectives.

Opening the door at the end Larkspur was ushered into a large, airy room, with two windows at either end overlooking the court,—and beheld Chief Inspector Byrnes, seated at a large office desk, making some memoranda on a pad. Chief Inspector Byrnes, the head of the great detective system of the great Empire City! the Vidocq of New York! in that he is the most successful criminal catcher that has ever presided over the “Detective Bureau” in the marble edifice on Mulberry Street.

Inspector Byrnes, a quiet, unostentatious, ordinary middle aged man, who, in a sack coat, round hat, with his hands in his side pockets, and a fragrant Havana in his mouth, is a familiar figure to many who little dream he is the famous Vidocq of New York, as he quietly meanders Broadway.

Alone in his office, his thoughts seek relief from professional problems by glancing at the portrait of a child in a little ornamented frame on his desk—his own little daughter, the idol of his life—a reminder of a pleasant home that strict attention to business so often keeps him away from.

“One moment,” said Inspector Byrnes pleasantly, motioning him to a chair, as the attendant retired.

A glance about the room revealed several large black and white sketches in frames, the titles of

which explained the subjects:—"Photographing a Rogue," showing how it required several to hold an unwilling criminal while his likeness is secured for the Rogue's Gallery; "His First Offence," depicting the timidity and abashment of a youth brought before the Inspector for the first time; "Mob in a Riot," a view of a riotous crowd. The glance also revealed several portraits.

"Well, sir,—Mr. Larkspur," said the Inspector, glancing at his card as he finished writing.

Larkspur was proceeding by apologizing for intruding on him to allude to his business, when Inspector Byrnes laconically, with a puff of his cigar, exclaimed:

"State your case! State your case!"

Larkspur thought he gave a very succinct statement of his "peculiar and most extraordinary case," but he bored Inspector Byrnes by his recital, and he exclaimed:

"Nothing peculiar or most extraordinary! Anonymous letter writing common enough! Have you got the documents?" And he held out his hand as if prepared to receive something weighty.

Larkspur took from his pocket the anonymous letter and handed it to him.

"This all?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, only just commenced," observed Inspec-

tor Byrnes, looking at the postmark. "Posted in your own district."

"Oh, yes, I had not thought of that," exclaimed Larkspur, noticing the fact.

"Do you suspect any one?"

"No; would not have come to you if I had."

"Hum! Any reason for any one writing such a letter?"

"None. God help me, none."

"What is your theory?"

"I have none. I did not suppose I had an enemy in the world."

"Domestic arrangements always happy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hum! Well, leave this with me; call again when you receive another one."

"Do you suppose I will be bombarded regularly with these epistles?"

"Depends on the motive—if for blackmail or revenge, yes; if for mischief, probably not."

"Inspector Byrnes, this is a very serious case for me, sir."

"Yes, no doubt. Equally to me as to you."

"Do you think you will be able to ferret out the writer?"

"Can't say. Never can."

"You say these cases are common?"

"Yes."

"Can you give me some information about—about others?"

"Have no time. Besides each case here is a privacy."

"Can you advise me?"

"Yes; keep your own counsel. Good morning!"

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

LARKSPUR only remained in his office—he was the agent of a woolen house on Mercer Street—long enough to open and dispose of the morning mail. He went down town to the counting house of his father-in-law, who, much to his chagrin, received him coldly, evidently influenced by his daughter's recital of her woes.

"Now, where there is smoke there is fire," observed Mr. King.

He softened and evinced a sympathetic interest when Larkspur told him of his visit to Byrnes and his determination to clear the mystery, convinced finally of his innocence.

"Belle has her mother's temper and jealousy," observed Mr. King, "and she will not change until convinced. I told her she would create a scandal that could not be easily handled if she remained away from home."

Larkspur hurried uptown to Mr. King's resi-

dence, but his wife would not see him. She sent her mother down to receive him.

The mother, of course, espoused the daughter's side.

In vain Larkspur protested his innocence.

Mrs. King, with a sarcastic and incredulous smile, listened, but offered neither advice nor consolation.

"Well, won't you advise Belle to return to my house until convinced of my innocence or guilt?"

"She will return provided you occupy a separate apartment, and do not intrude yourself on her until she is convinced of your innocence or your guilt, in which latter case she will return here, and commence divorce proceedings."

Larkspur observed that probably a second missive would come, and to show his careless disregard, he would like his wife to open it.

"Oh, you expect another to-day?" inquired his mother-in-law, sarcastically.

"Inspector Byrnes said I would most likely receive another."

"Oh! Inspector Byrnes! He is a wise man!"

"Did you show him the letter? Oh, yes, you left it with him. Wasn't he surprised you only had one to show him?"

"He made no comment beyond expressing the opinion that others would come from the same source, and I must bring them to him."

"Oh, yes."

Not wishing to engage in any argument with his mother-in-law, who if the truth were told, had had some unpleasant experiences in early life with her husband, before he settled down into domestic felicity, and was consequently prejudiced against mankind generally, and predisposed to take sides against him on general grounds, Larkspur left, and before going home—what a hollow word that sacred name was now to him!—took a stroll in the Central Park, to clear and invigorate his faculties by healthy, open-air exercise.

CHAPTER V.

A SECOND LETTER.

LARKSPUR found his wife returned, when he reached home.

As she had retired to her chamber, ordering that her dinner should be sent up to her, he did not disturb her.

He selected a chair in the window of the sitting-room and tried to engage his thoughts by reading George Eliot's "Gwendolen," which he had recently commenced, but the book possessed no charms for him now, as his mind would dwell upon his own troubles.

He was aroused from a reverie by the entrance of his wife, who, evidently unaware of his return

turned to leave the room upon discovering his presence.

"Belle!" he ejaculated, almost involuntarily.

"My mother has mapped out a course for me to pursue," she said, haughtily, "and I will remain here, keeping to myself, until you vindicate yourself—if you can."

"Oh, don't prejudge me!"

"I should not, but now that I seem to remember several such envelopes coming to this address; but the superscription was so plain that I never opened them by mistake."

"I swear to you by all I hold sacred that that was the first and only letter I have received of that kind."

She darted from the room, with a haughty glance, not deigning or vouchsafing a reply.

Soon after she entered the room, in perceptible excitement, bearing several letters in her hand, just delivered by the postman.

Without a word she handed him a yellow envelope, with the suspicious superscription, with the difference this time that there was no prefix Mr., the name being followed by the more conventional Esq.

He was about tearing the envelope open when the thought flashed across his mind to hand it to his wife, which, rising and advancing to her, he did, with the request:

"Please open, madam."

-Mrs. Larkspur, with flashing eyes, tore open the envelope, revealing a pink-tinted sheet, as previously, with the following lines in the same handwriting, which she glanced over silently.

“WEDNESDAY.

“DEAREST—Sorry beyond expression in words that I was absent when you called this afternoon. I do not understand your message, however. Can’t you run around for a few minutes this evening? I expected you until past midnight last evening.

As ever,

“MINNIE.”

“Where have you been since leaving my father’s?” she asked indignantly, glancing up from the letter.

“Strolling in the Park to get a little fresh air after a restless night,” he replied.

“This is evidence to the contrary,” she mused tossing him the letter.

He hastily scanned the missive in a glance.

“It’s false. I made no such call this afternoon! It is a lie!” he exclaimed, picking up the envelope, which she had dropped to the floor, and enclosing the letter.

He examined the postmark, and found it the same as the day before; he placed the envelope in his pocket and arose to leave the room.

“Where are you going—to meet that woman?”

"No—to Inspector Byrnes," he replied. "I promised to send him more such letters if I received them—"

"Send it to him."

"No; on second thoughts I will keep it and deliver it personally to-morrow morning," he answered, resuming his seat. "I will remain here."

"Pray not on my account," she retorted, retiring to her own apartment, from which she did not emerge until the next morning, when he was leaving, when she said :

"If any letter comes during the day I will send it to you at the office, that you may take it to Inspector Byrnes on your way uptown," her manner conveying as much as her words, scepticism that he was consulting the famous detective in the matter.

CHAPTER VI.

HEADQUARTERS AGAIN.

LARKSPUR stopped at Headquarters on his way downtown in the morning.

"These letters are written by no slouch," said Inspector Byrnes. "As yet, the motive inspiring the writer does not appear. It soon will develop."

"You think there is a conspiracy to ruin me?"

"O, I don't know about that," replied the Inspector, contrasting the letter and the envelope. "There are evidently two people in the game—a man and a woman. The letter is written by a woman or a very clever penman. The envelope is addressed by a business man. It is a different hand from that of the writer of the letter."

"What am I to do?"

"Don't worry about the case; don't worry about me. When I want to see you I'll send for you. Your frequent coming to Headquarters to see me might put the scoundrel to flight. See?"

"Yes."

"Send me the letters as fast as they come. If there is any scheme you'll receive more."

"But you will devise some plan to ferret out the scoundrel or scoundrels?"

"That is what I am here for," replied the Inspector imperturbably, as, under all circumstances, deeply interested in the case, yet apparently unconcerned. "Good day, sir!"

Larkspur, who, in his business, would not have uttered a needless word, would have liked to question the Inspector in regard to his management of the case: but the latter's peremptory "Good day, sir!" left him no alternative but to return the salutation and leave.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THIRD LETTER.

IMAGINE Larkspur's surprise when he reached his office to find in the morning's mail a letter from the mysterious and annoying Minnie.

This letter, however, was not inclosed in an innocent and ordinary yellow business envelope, with the address in a masculine, clerical hand, like those sent to his residence, but in a cover of the same tint and delicacy of the note-sheet, and the superscription was in the same female chirography.

Larkspur glanced at the postmark, to find that it was the same as the other two letters.

The letter read as follows :

"DEAREST—I don't know what to make of you, you've acted so strangely and contrarily the past few days. Please look in on me on your way up this afternoon. I shall remain in all the afternoon, and shall not give up hope of seeing you until ten o'clock. Yours, as ever,

"MINNIE."

Hastily making a copy, that he might show his wife, if the occasion offered, to prove to her, that he had no confidences from her, he placed the letter in its envelope and inclosed the same to Inspector Byrnes by a district messenger.

CHAPTER VIII.

OFFICIAL ORDERS.

"H—UM!" ejaculated Inspector Byrnes when he received and read the letter inclosed him by Larkspur. "This boil will soon be ready for the lance. It must soon come to a head now or fail in the attempt. If the man is guilty of a liaison and is trying to use me to break it off he'll get himself into hot water. I think he is a true bill, however, and is innocent. The same postal mark shows that the writer is new in the business. An old hand would cover his tracks by using a different posting station every time. Perhaps, however, he thinks the ordinary envelope used will cloak him sufficiently from identification. H—um! I think I can start on the case now!"

The inspector tapped a small gong-bell on his table; an attendant looked in.

"Ralston!"

The attendant closed the door, and in a few moments a tall, slender, sleepy looking man, with amazingly scant reddish hair and beard, came in.

"Ralston—anonymous letter writing—documents—pipe the station—shadow box—report when ready," said Inspector Byrnes, handing the other the three letters.

"Yes, sir," replied Ralston, perfunctorily, taking the package, and backing out to the door, which he shoved open, closing with a bang.

CHAPTER IX.

INVESTIGATION.

RALSTON went to his desk in another apartment in the suite assigned to the Detective Bureau, and shoving his hat on to the back of his head, stretching his legs over an adjacent chair and lighting a cigarette, he proceeded to leisurely read the letters.

"Forgery?" jocularly inquired another detective at an adjoining desk.

"Naw—a puddin—nonymous letter writin," responded Ralston. "Glad the weather is pleasant."

Having finished reading the three letters, Ralston took the Third Avenue Elevated Railway up town, alighting at the station nearest the sub-postal station he would visit.

Arrived here he inquired for the officer in charge and explained his business.

He interviewed the morning collectors, but none of them could identify the envelopes as having been taken up by them from the boxes on their route. The out or on squad, however, soon

came in and one of these identified the letters stating that he had taken them from the box on the corner of —— street and —— avenue, remembering the fact because there were no stores in that locality, and consequently bill or collection letters were seldom posted in that box.

The last, or third letter had been posted after eight o'clock, but the other two had each been dropped before ten o'clock in the morning.

The next morning, from a neighboring building, Ralston shadowed—that is, he watched this box.

Any one perceiving him would, from his indifferent and aimless manner, have concluded he was one of those unlucky fellows who are always getting out of employment, but don't seem to mind it as long as they can get along.

No one for a moment would have thought he was a detective. While they might have concluded he was not such a fool as he looked, none would have supposed him shrewd enough to be a detective.

Without apparently doing so, and consequently not attracting attention, he carefully mentally surveyed every one who dropped a letter in the box.

A close observer would have noticed that his interest ceased when he discovered that "a party" was going to drop in a white or a pink, or any but a yellow envelope.

Finally a well-dressed, distingue but dissipated young man of about five-and-twenty came down the avenue, took from the inside pocket of his light top-coat an envelope—a yellow envelope.

The close observer would have noticed that Ralston's eyes glistened and his muscles swelled like those of a cat ready to spring on its prey, as he watched the yellow envelope come forth and go into the box.

Immediately that he heard the thud of the lid, indicating that the letter was beyond the reach of the depositor should he wish to reclaim it, he pulled himself together and started toward the corner with the action and bearing of a man who had no particular object for hurrying. Reaching the box he took from his pocket what across the street would appear to be an ordinary white envelope of the conventional size.

It was not an envelope, however, but a solid piece of pasteboard, on one side of which was a piece of shoemaker's wax, looking like a seal.

Ralston dropped this tablet into the letter box with the side containing the wax downward, so that it would fall and fasten upon the letter dropped just before.

Then he turned and followed the gentleman who had deposited the yellow envelope for several blocks until he had carefully mentally photographed him.

"New one. Never been up. Don't seem fly. Amateur, I guess. Style. Seems solid," soliloquized Ralston, mentally surveying his man.

Satisfied with his mental notes, Ralston turned and retraced his steps to the postal station, and, informing the officer in charge that he had made a plant, waited for the "out" squad of collectors to come in.

When the bag of that circuit was turned out for assortment, the yellow envelope and the white blank were stuck together.

"There's the beauty," exclaimed the collector.

"The pad hit her plumb," said Ralston, detaching the two, and observing that the yellow envelope was addressed to Mr. Andrew Larkspur at his private residence, in the same bold, masculine, clerical hand as the two first.

"Shove her along," he said, jocularly tossing the letter to the stamping clerk.

Leaving, he went immediately to Headquarters, and reported to Inspector Byrnes.

"Good!" was the laconic response of the chief, as Ralston backed out after making his report.

Inspector Byrnes prepared a telegraphic message to Larkspur, which he sent to his residence, as follows :

"The mail this afternoon will bring you another letter from party. Send it to me in the morning."

CHAPTER X.

THE WIFE'S DOUBTS.

MRS. LARKSPUR really had doubted her husband's assertion that he was consulting Inspector Byrnes—for her confidence in him was shaken by the doubts inspired by the anonymous letters—and had worked herself into a mental condition of general distrust so far as he was concerned.

The dispatch from the detective convinced her of the truth of his statements. Her husband disturbed the sanctity of her established privacy to show her this dispatch, which he found awaiting him on his arrival home.

The mail a little later brought the letter indicated.

Same pink-tinted note sheet, identical female hand, same yellow envelope, identical superscription in bold, masculine hand.

The note read :

"DEAREST—If you think you can abandon me, like a cast-off garment, you make the greatest mistake of your life. Remember all your declarations to me, of the hopes inspired, the devotion engrafted, and think of

"MINNIE."

Larkspur had opened and read the letter in his

anxiety, without thinking of handing it to his wife to open and read first, as he would in a cooler moment have done, as good policy under the circumstance.

"Damnation!" he muttered. "Curse the hand that ever penned this outrageous note!"

He handed the letter to his wife to read, while he picked the envelope from the waste basket, into which he had thoughtlessly, from habit, cast it.

The letter aroused the wife to great indignation.

She moved as if to tear it into tatters, when he caught her hand, and clutched it from her grasp.

"Remember, Inspector Byrnes will want it!" he exclaimed, smoothing out the crumpled sheet.

Mrs. Larkspur paced the room in growing and almost uncontrollable indignation.

"Why not confess the truth at once?" she exclaimed. "I will forgive you if you will give up this woman! After such evidence as this, you cannot deceive me."

"I tell you I am innocent of your insinuations. I do not even know who this woman or person signing herself 'Minnie' is!"

"I cannot believe it! The evidence is too strong against you!"

"What evidence?"

"Those letters. The confessions of that sorrowing and wronged woman!"

"You consider anonymous letters evidence against my word?"

"To me those letters are most convincing evidence."

"Pshaw. I am almost inclined to use the cant phrase, 'You make me tired!'"

"Is she some young girl whom you have wronged? She writes like a cruelly deceived, innocent girl."

"I swear to you by all I hold sacred that there is no truth or meaning in her insinuations and imputations; that I have not the faintest idea of who the writer is."

"I wish I could believe you," answered Mrs. Larkspur.

"I don't ask you to believe me until I've ferreted out the mystery. I only ask you now to trust me, not to condemn me without hearing."

"My confidence in you is entirely shaken."

"Because you do not exercise your reason."

"Because I do," she retorted. "My reason convinces me and condemns you. Other envelopes have come to the house of the same description. This liaison has been going on I don't know how long under my very eyes."

"The envelope is ordinary, usually used commercially, and the others only inclosed bills."

"Not billet-doux?" sneered his wife. "I really sympathize with this poor creature."

"Your wit is worthy of the modern comic

opera," the husband could not help saying, facetiously, while feeling as if his heart would break.

"The knowledge of your affairs could only come from one who possessed your confidence. The letters are honest, and I consider the case one for private settlement, rather than detective investigation."

"Having nothing to fear from the most public investigation, I shall court it," exclaimed Larkspur, hotly and firmly. "I shall ferret out this mystery if it takes my last dollar. I cannot be injured, only vindicated, by detective investigation."

"You may be; but how will it fare with the poor woman whom you have abandoned to her fate, after kindling hopes that will never be fulfilled?"

"When she is discovered you can decide her fate."

"You seek to combine insult with injury. While I commiserate with her, I do not wish to become the arbiter of her destiny."

Thoroughly aroused, and fearing that he might say something which he would regret, Larkspur left the room.

He mailed the letter just received to Inspector Byrnes.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CASE DEVELOPS.

INSPECTOR BYRNES, on receiving the letter the next morning, glanced hastily over it, and shoved it into the pigeonhole with the others.

He tapped the bell, and the doorman bounced in.

“Ralston!”

The doorman bounced out, and almost immediately Ralston entered.

Inspector Byrnes motioned him to a seat.

“You nailed your man. The case is curious. I can’t find any motive. It looked like blackmail at the start. It may develop that way. The man, so far in the case, is a stall. Perhaps he is the lover of the girl. There are two of them. If Larkspur didn’t protest his innocence, I should think the discarded woman was squealing for revenge; but he declares he doesn’t know the party; has no such affair that could lead to anything.”

Inspector Byrnes puffed his ever-visible cigar meditatively.

Ralston stroked his shaggy beard with an expression of expectancy, as if he thought the Chief should do all the talking. Ralston was Byrnes’ pal, mate or double, who assisted him in his cases, often initiating under direction the

work which the other would take up later and carry to a brilliant success which would make a sensation in all the papers.

He rarely ventured a suggestion except when requested.

"Looked the party up?"

"Yes; he's a new 'un, never up. On the gentleman lay," Ralston replied, meaning that the well-dressed gentleman whom he saw drop the letter into the box was unknown to the police; that he had never before come under their attention; that he would pass as a gentleman.

"H'm. Shadow him; report when ready," observed the chief inspector after a few moments of reflection and several vigorous puffs of his cigar.

Ralston bowed and withdrew with a contented smile, as shadowing a man—that is, following him day and night until his habits and haunts are located—is often the pleasantest part of a detective's work, leading to fine dinners, theatres, etc.

Though New York is such a large, populous city that one would think an humble individual could soon lose his identity in the crowd or in the byways, it is easy for a detective to get on the track of and shadow a man.

Ralston started his hunt by frequenting the populous and fashionable centripetal point of Broadway at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-third

street, where one afternoon he discovered "his man" crossing the street.

Though he apparently looked at nobody, yet eyed everybody, Ralston, until he found his man, had only him in his eye—especially his peculiarities of gait and manner, which it is ten to one he would have discovered beneath any disguise.

We can easily change our habits, but not our manners. The detective relies on his study of peculiarities to identify his man. A nervous habit of tearing off and rolling between his fingers bits of newspapers or letters was a characteristic of this man that Ralston soon discovered.

Ralston piped or shadowed "his man" to a fashionable café, where they dined at neighboring tables: then to the Casino, where they witnessed an admirable performance of "Nanon," and then to the Grand Central Depot, where he took the train to Albany.

Observing that he had attracted "his man's" attention, he did not follow him on board the train, but pointing him out to one of the Bureau always on duty here, he told him to watch for him and notify Headquarters of his return.

CHAPTER XII.

A "HERALD" PERSONAL.

JEALOUSY in a woman, like ambition in a man, feeds and fattens on itself, and Mrs. Larkspur, as we have seen, became almost a monomaniac on the subject.

She readily persuaded herself that she could not believe a word her husband told her, and consequently did not for a moment credit his statement that he had not the slightest idea who was the author of the mysterious and compromising letters addressed to him.

She decided that his putting the case in Inspector Byrnes' hands was simply a subterfuge, a trick to deceive her, and that he would shelter the woman from discovery.

It was due herself, however, that she should give him a fair chance to vindicate himself—a result she did not consider possible or probable.

They maintained friendly, though strained, relations, to prevent exciting the suspicions of the domestics.

Several days elapsing without any more letters coming, she concluded that her wily husband had succeeded in placating "Minnie," and her jealousy became all the more indignant, especially as Larkspur maintained he could offer no explanation.

She preferred taking the counsel of a friend of her childhood, a spinster, Miss Bevins, to that of her parents, who, while very indignant in their bearing toward Larkspur, were inclined to be conservative in their advice to her, urging her to patiently await the issue of events.

She confided the whole story to Miss Bevins, who had never been liked by Larkspur because he thought her a mischief-maker; and that lady found the opportunity for revenging his slights by coinciding with the wife, and so fanning the flame of jealousy.

"He claims that he has not heard from her since; has not answered any of the letters; indeed, does not know who she is?"

"Yes, positively."

"Quite a fairy tale."

"Well, assume he is telling the truth; that is, that, wishing to get rid of her, he has not answered her recent letters."

"Well?"

"She must be very indignant."

"Naturally."

"Now, you can get into communication with her and learn the whole story—"

"How—?"

"By a personal in the *Herald*!"

"Capital."

Miss Bevins drew a sheet of note-paper from the desk, seized the pencil and wrote.

"Something like this," she said, reading: "Minnie. Letters intercepted. Deuce to pay. Am watched. Cannot call. Write to this address, appointing an interview away from home. Will explain all. L. A., private letter box, Thirteenth street and Third avenue."

"L. A.," soliloquized Mrs. Larkspur. "Oh, I see—his initials reversed. What is the address?"

"A private letter-box address place. I've read about it."

"Will you go and get the letters and insert the advertisement?" inquired Mrs. Larkspur, who habitually never did for herself anything she could get any one to do for her.

"Yes," gleefully assented Miss Bevins. "Yes, I'll attend to this part, and what fun we'll have in reading the letters together. I wonder if Mr. Larkspur is in the habit of reading the 'Personal' column in the *Herald*? My brother always reads it the first thing."

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Larkspur. "I have never heard him speak of it, if he does."

Larkspur, however, did not read the "Personals" in the *Herald*, and consequently did not notice the advertisement the next morning, which, under the circumstances, might have attracted his attention.

Mrs. Larkspur felt half ashamed of herself the next morning when she saw it, but a call from

Miss Bevins restored her confidence that she was acting rightly.

Miss Bevins said she had got her brother to register at the private letter-box place for letters addressed to L. A., the terms being that he should pay five cents for each letter received.

The man in charge informed him that in order to give ample time for the reply he should not call until late in the evening.

Miss Bevins promised to run up the next morning immediately after breakfast, and she came with six letters in her reticule—four had been sent through the mail, two by messenger.

To the intense disgust of both, none of the letters was the one they had hoped for and expected.

Neither of these letters was in the handwriting of the mysterious Minnie.

These letters were written by adventuresses who sought appointments with L. A., and plainly showed their ignorance of Minnie's letters.

Of the two, Miss Bevins evinced the most chagrin and disappointment at the failure of the little plot.

"You may depend on it, my dear," she said snappishly, "that he has settled matters with her and consequently she was not caught by the bait."

"I suppose so," sighed Mrs. Larkspur, who wondered how many more Minnies there were in the city if such a crop came up so quickly.

"Why not put a detective on your husband's track?" said Miss Bevins.

"My father would not hear of, such a thing," responded Mrs. Larkspur. "Besides, it is expensive. I have no money of my own."

"Well, he is either a most sinned against man or the most cunning I ever heard of," said Miss Bevins, whose long chase after a husband had imbittered her against the sterner sex on general principles.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FOURTH LETTER.

HAD no other letter from Minnie come to disturb Mrs. Larkspur, it is likely that, in time, her confidence in her husband would have been restored, as there were no more replies to the "personal."

In two days, however, the evening delivery brought to the house another letter from Minnie, identical with the others in every respect excepting, of course, the subject matter. This one, undated, read.

"DEAR ANDY—[a term her husband detested, and his wife never addressed him by, always calling him Andrew]—saw your personal in the *Herald*, but it won't do, even for a blind to

madame. I understand your tricks, and can checkmate every time.

“MINNIE.”

Mr. Larkspur had not returned home to dinner when this letter came, and Mrs. Larkspur opened it immediately.

“Well, this shows that they have not met since,” she said, pleased with the idea, “or is it a preconcerted trick of theirs to deceive me?”

She handed the letter to Larkspur when he came in and explained to him about the “personal.”

“I have all along thought these letters were the work of some adventuress seeking to ensnare me,” said he, “and consequently promptly sought Byrnes’ assistance in effectually stopping them.”

“When none came yesterday or the day before,” she said, “I began to hope that she was silenced, but this is evidence to the contrary.”

“Let me see the ‘Personal,’” he asked, and she brought him the *Herald* containing it, and fully explained matters. She also showed him the replies received.

After reading these, Larkspur said he would take them and Minnie’s last to Inspector Byrnes in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE "PRIVATE LETTER BOX."

INSPECTOR BYRNES had been busy on a more important case, and he sent out word to Larkspur to call again at 9.30.

Inspector Byrnes motioned to a chair, evidently prepared to talk to him, for before he had kept him standing, wishing to terminate the interview as soon as possible.

Larkspur handed him the several letters, hastily and succinctly explaining the situation.

"That private letter box business is getting to be a nuisance, and we must put a stop to it.* My pal has at last got a plant, but I shall keep my counsel for a few days. Now don't ask me any questions. In good time you shall know all. These letters do not bear on the case," and Inspector Byrnes tore up the batch of replies and tossed the fragments into his waste basket.

"You say you have a plant on the case?"

"Oh, that means that we have got down to work."

"Any clue?"

"Can't say, replied the inspector, chewing the end of his half-lighted or smouldering cigar.

* A few days afterward all these places were closed by the police.

"Now tell me who are your social intimates, who visits your house regularly?"

"Very few. My wife's health is delicate and she sees little company. I am so devoted to my business that I have no time for society. We find our social pleasure in going to the theaters."

"Does your business keep you out much at night—about town?"

"Yes, in the season; with the buyers and jobbers."

"H—um! Minnie is not the ordinary anonymous letter writer whose object is blackmail or conquest. She is on some other lay."

"I swear to you I know no one who could have any reason to address me such letters. But for the position my wife has taken I should have been disposed to regard these letters as a practical joke and thrown them into the fire with a laugh, after reading them."

"Being out of the criminal line there will be more trouble in ferreting out this case than a usual one of blackmail by regulars."

"Spare no expense."

"Do you suspect any of your friends?"

"Not one."

"If any of the replies had been significant in connection with Minnie's case I should be inclined to suspect Miss Bevins; but unless she is a very deep one, she is only what she figures for."

"I see this last letter bears the postmark of a sub-station higher uptown."

"Yes," replied the Inspector, "that looks more like a professional beginning to confuse the trail."

The attendant rapped on the door.

"Come."

The attendant looked in, and backed out without attracting the slightest attention from Byrnes.

"The case is hardly developed."

The attendant rapped again, and at the word "come," entered and handed Byrnes an envelope, which the latter opened, glanced at the scrawl in pencil on pad paper, and nodded to the attendant to leave.

The scrawl read :

"Party not back.

"RALSTON."

"H—um," said Inspector Byrnes, meditatively, regarding his cigar affectionately. "Send me other letters as they come ; don't mention the case to any of your friends.' I'll send for you when I want to see you ; don't come again until I do."

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIFTH LETTER.

LARKSPUR enjoined the secrecy on his wife Inspector Byrnes had imposed on him, and she respected the injunction excepting that she confided in Miss Bevins; but the request to that lady that she should keep the matter entirely private had not the slightest effect on her, and she went about telling in the strictest confidence all the details.

As no other letter came for several days, and as Miss Bevins was too busy going about retailing in the strictest confidence the scandal to call and fan the flame of jealousy that had begun to smoulder in Mrs. Larkspur's breast as she became convinced from his actions that her husband was sincere and earnest in his determination to ferret out the mysterious Minnie, there was tranquil routine in the home, until, more than a week afterward, the following missive arrived:

DEAREST—I am sorry to have thrown a bombshell, as you say, into your home; but did you not tell me to send my letters to your home, inclosed in a commercial envelope, with the superscription in a clerical hand, so that you could hear from me by a later mail than at your office? Now, why not see me? Let us arrange our matters, and I'll stop writing. Don't waste

any more money in *Herald* Personals. You know where I am, who I am, and that I always will be your own true,

MINNIE.

Mrs. Larkspur had opened this letter the moment it arrived, and she was in a towering rage of jealousy when her husband came, later.

"It is no use lying to me any longer. If you have a spark of honor in you, you will make peace with that poor wronged woman!" she exclaimed, tossing him the letter, which, it is almost needless to say, annoyed him beyond expression.

He examined the postmark, and found it was that of the original letter. He inclosed it in an envelope addressed to Inspector Byrnes, Police Headquarters, Mulberry street, city, and mailed it, taking it himself to the box on the corner.

Here, sauntering up the street, he met an old friend of his wife, and, through her, of his own, Mr. Black, who said he was going to the house to call on them.

"My wife is slightly indisposed this evening," Larkspur said, "but she may see an old friend like you. Anyway, I shall be pleased to receive you."

Mrs. Larkspur, however, sent down word that she was indisposed, and begged to be excused, and the two gentlemen went into the library,

where they could smoke and chat undisturbed by any other callers.

Mr. Black was one of those well-dressed, ordinary, conventional, easy-going gentlemen, who would not attract attention from any one, excepting possibly because he had a nervous habit of tearing off the corners of newspapers or notes and rolling the fragments between his fingers without ever being conscious of the fact.

He was quite well off, living on an income from some manufacturing industry in one of the New England cities, and passed as a gentleman of leisure and pleasure, a confirmed bachelor, who might leave for Europe to-morrow and return on the same steamer if the fancy took him.

He had been up in New England on some business, and had just returned via Albany, and said he had not been to see them for so long a time that he was beginning to feel ashamed of himself.

Larkspur got very tired of him before he left, as Black's conversation of conventional generalities did not interest him in the least, and he was so preoccupied with his own thoughts that he frequently found that he was paying no attention while listening to his tattle.

Black noticed this aberration, and urged him to confide in him, but Larkspur haughtily assured him there was no trouble in his thoughts, while, however, Black knew better, as he had that

afternoon, on his way from the train, met Miss Bevins, who had confided to him the salacious morceaux of domestic scandal, which caused him to smile while he wondered who could be the writer of the letters.

Black left quite a little mound of crumpled and rolled fragments of paper on the table, an evidence to those who knew him of his presence, so long was he in his inquisition, which so far as Larkspur was concerned, made him no wiser.

CHAPTER XVI.

SCANDAL.

SEVERAL days afterward, in which there was no change in the strained relations between the husband and wife, they were mutually incensed by a paragraph in the original of the modern so-called "Society" papers—for I am quite confident that Morris & Willis never contemplated in their *Home Journal* (which so proudly maintains its own) the contemporaneous "society" paper—Mr. Barksdale's *Our Society*, a pink-tinted little sheet, which, like all pioneers, had a hard time of it before suspending in bankruptcy.

A marked copy of the sheet was sent Mrs. Larkspur by some kind friend.

Of course, they wondered how the idea got

into the editor's head, for they did not know that Miss Bevins had been so industriously circulating the story, in the strictest confidence.

Of course, kind and probably well-meaning friends sent each of them marked copies; but as no names were given, and only the facts hinted at, Mr. Larkspur saw that he could take no notice of the item.

There was a bond of sympathy between them, a union for mutual protection, started by this article, that, but for another missive from Minnie, might have resulted in a reunion.

The mail one evening brought a large, square, home-made envelope, with the superscription in the well-known hand, but this time addressed boldly and unmistakably to Mrs. Larkspur, to whom the servant consequently naturally took it.

The envelope inclosed a photograph of a young woman with a fine face seated beside Mr. Larkspur. She was apparently a blonde, with large blue eyes—no doubt a very pretty and attractive woman. Underneath the one, in the hand of the letters, was written "Minnie," and under the other "Andrew."

Mrs. Larkspur could hardly retain herself until Mr. Larkspur came home; by which time she had worked herself into such a towering passion that she was literally beside herself.

When he came in she rushed to him and thrust the photograph into his hand, exclaiming:

"This settles it! I go back to my father to-night! I would not believe you now under oath! Oh, don't talk to me!"

Larkspur was almost dumfounded; he could not believe his eyes at first.

"I know no such woman," he said firmly. "I never saw her to my knowledge. I never sat for this photograph. Yes, mine is the same as that by Sarony."

There was no imprint on the photograph, and it was a clumsy bit of amateur work at best.

Comparing the Sarony photograph with this one, it was found they were identical—or, rather, that this one was a copy of Sarony's.

Mrs. Larkspur forbade her husband to address her again, except in writing or through a third party, and retired to her own apartments.

Before he left the next morning Mrs. Larkspur sent in a note to the effect that she would return to her father's, and consult him in regard to commencing divorce proceedings.

He in reply wrote on the back of her note:

"If in thirty days from date hereof this mystery is not cleared up to your entire satisfaction, I will consent to a divorce and afford you the evidence to obtain it.

CHAPTER XVII.

MINNIE'S PHOTO.

LARKSPUR thought he could not intrust the photograph to the mail, and decided to take it to Headquarters on his way down town, notwithstanding Inspector Byrnes' injunction that he should not call again until sent for.

He found Ralston in charge of the great detective's desk, and that his envelope, inclosing Minnie's last letter, had not been opened.

Ralston vouchsafed the reply that the Inspector had been absent from the city on a big forgery case, but that his return might be hourly expected.

Larkspur showed Ralston the photograph, which he hastily examined, exclaiming:

"This is a bulldozer, that is, two photographs have been cut out and pasted together and then photographed. The artist is a blooming amateur and his work is very clumsy. You can see yours is better taken originally than hers. How the chap who takes the crooks for the rogues' gallery will laugh when I show him this. We've got Central Pete down-stairs and I'm going to take him to have his photograph taken this afternoon

to go into the collection with his friend, Hungry Joe." *

The door opened and in walked Inspector Byrnes, imperturbable and serene, with the perennial cigar in his mouth; showing not the slightest fatigue after an arduous night, or the racking thoughts filling his mind.

Larkspur hastily explained matters to him, telling him about his wife's decision in regard to a divorce.

"I have been very busy with an important case, which is just finished," said the Inspector. "I will get down to work on this case in earnest now. I am satisfied the party is not a professional, but some friend of the family who knows all the particulars."

"I can suspect no one," said Larkspur, finally.

"We can run down a crook easily, because we understand the way they work. It takes time to get a plant on a new man. However, there must always be a beginning, and we'll soon get onto the lay of this new one."

"I sometimes fear he will prove too smart for us."

"Never fear that. While it is true that suckers are born every minute and flymen only about

* Central Pete and Hungry Joe were two prominent confidence men, the latter achieving celebrity by buncoing Oscar Wilde.

once in twenty-four hours, one flyman is equal to the twenty-five suckers of the total number born who become crooks. Facts show that as soon as a crook devises a new scheme a smart detective turns up to outwit him.* So it goes; one day it is the crook who triumphs, the next the detective—a trite exemplification of the adage that every dog has his day. This case of yours has peculiar features, and I am satisfied that revenge and not blackmail is the motive. I have many such cases of the kind where parties have been annoyed for months by anonymous letters. I have never yet failed in running down these cases.”

“Spare no expense,” said Larkspur.

“Send me anything else that comes, and respond at once, no matter if it is at midnight when I send for you. Good morning.”

Larkspur retired with a bow.

Byrnes tapped his bell for Ralston, and that personage immediately entered.

“I want you to get right down to this case,” said he, handing him the letter he had just opened, and showing him the photograph.

“You see, both these are posted where you piped your man. Lay for him. He’s returned

* The afternoon and next morning’s papers contained lengthy accounts of his discovery and capturing one of the most formidable gangs of forgers ever organized in this country.

some other way. Show our artist this for points," he said, handing Ralston the photograph.

Ralston repaired to the studio of the photographer who had the contract for taking all the photographs for the collection of criminals kept at each station house and at Headquarters, and known as the "Rogues' Gallery," and submitted to him for criticism the photograph handed him.

"A blooming amateur's work!" exclaimed the artist. "The original of the man is much better than that of the woman. Cut out, pasted on a back, then took—see the shadows. This is a stall—parties never took together—any photographer can tell that!"

Ralston went uptown and shadowed the letter-box, and again the next morning without any discovery of his party, and as no letters had been received by Larkspur, it was concluded he had left the city again after mailing the last two.

He determined, however, to shadow the box until he piped his man or had his attention attracted elsewhere by the selection of a new mailing point by the writer under the signature of "Minnie."

CHAPTER XVIII.

RALSTON'S DIARY.

A WEEK sped by; no more letters were received from Minnie; Ralston could find no clue, Mrs. Larkspur had accepted Larkspur's proposition to remain quiet for thirty days, and seven had already elapsed.

The cessation of the letters convinced the wife that her husband had made his peace with Minnie, and she began to wonder if she could obtain a divorce with such evidence if it were controverted by her husband.

The photograph was a parting shot, and no more letters were received from "Minnie," who was evidently satisfied with the havoc she had played in the Larkspur household.

Ralston decided that he would be more likely to pipe his man in a promenade when least expected than at the usual letter box, and he took to strolling the populous uptown thoroughfares.

He came across his man again the second morning, and shadowed him from that time.

I cannot do better than copy a few entries from his diary of the case:

Tuesday—Piped party going up Broadway, near Eleventh Street. Liquored at Union Square,

also Fifth Avenue. Lunched at Brown's chop house. Saw pictures at Academy of Design. Dinner at Del's. Saw Fanny Davenport in "Charity" at Fifth Avenue. Left party in his flat on Madison avenue, near —th Street.

Wednesday—Piped party coming out flat, quarter to ten. Downtown to a broker's in cars; uptown afoot. Stopped at Gimbread's and purchased some pink tinted note paper, same as used by party. To flat, remained in.

Thursday—Party sick. Piped elevator boy; party income man: amateur photographer; good fellow. Has girls to come to dine in his flat. He took photograph of elevator boy.

Friday—Party out. Uptown to see girl in flat corner Lexington Avenue and —th street. Walked down Lexington past letter-box but did not post any letter. Routine day shadow. Mem.—Does the girl write the letters on paper he takes to her; does he mail 'em in nearest letter-box? Solid with the elevator boy.

Saturday—Party in until noontime. Blonde girl called and lunched with him. They attended matinee of "Hazel Kirke," Madison Square. Party ordinary and conventional, but nervous, with habit of tearing off and crumpling fragments of paper. Tore off all the corners of his programme. Dinner at Delmonico's. The two went to girl's flat.

Sunday—Party leaves for Stamford, early

train. Got into flat by elevator boy to see his photo. Find lots photos of girls which party would not like seen. Mem.—See Comstock. Party not expected back till Tuesday.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME CLUES.

RALSTON succeeded in ingratiating himself in the confidence and friendship of the elevator boy to the extent that he succeeded in getting into the flat again, under pretence of wishing to inspect the photos of feminine beauty.

He rummaged the little room used as a photographic studio so thoroughly that in the dark room he unearthed a plate which he discovered was the one which printed the photograph of Minnie and Larkspur.

Overhauling some scraps in a waste bin in the corner, he discovered the fragments of the original picture, and found that two photographs had been cut and pasted side by side on a background; proving, as the expert had said, the two had never been taken in a group.

He also discovered that the gentleman did not use pink tinted paper for his private use, but that he had a stock of such on hand.

He found a note from the girl uptown and

identified her chirography with that of Minnie; all so quietly and dexterously that the suspicions of the elevator boy, who took charge of the flat when off duty, were not excited, nor any of the things rummaged so as to attract the attention of the owner when he returned.

Ralston reported to Inspector Byrnes.

"You've planted him," said the Inspector. "Now I don't want any mention of any name, but go and see Larkspur and pipe him if he has a friend who is in the habit of tearing off bits of paper from newspapers or letters when any happen to be around and rolling the fragments in his fingers. That will be as good a clue as we want."

Ralston visited Larkspur in his office, alleging that he was in the neighborhood and thought he would look in to say that no more letters had been received at Headquarters.

"None have come," replied Larkspur, "and but for that photograph the trouble between my wife and myself might be healed. By Jove, if you do not unravel this case before the thirty days are over I really believe my wife will carry out her threat of suing for a divorce. She is a very peculiar person in her way."

Ralston laughed, observing:

"Speaking of peculiar people, I came down in the cars with a man who, evidently unconsciously, in nervous abstraction tore off the corners of his

newspaper and rolled the fragments in his fingers, until it actually made me nervous to watch him."

"Oh, yes, I have seen that. I have a friend who always leaves a litter of pellets rolled this way wherever he sits, if there is any paper in his reach."

"To a detective, that would be a clue in shadowing a man," said Ralston, "though not, of course, in the case of your friend."

"Mr. Black—oh, no!" laughed Larkspur in response: "His friends call his little pellets his cards!"

Ralston left pretty well satisfied with his investigation.

CHAPTER XX.

CLOSE WORK.

RALSTON decided that his next move was to get into the confidence of the blonde young lady in the flat up Lexington avenue.

He addressed her a note from an uptown hotel, to the effect that—

"If you remember having met Captain Amory of the English Army, Captain Amory would do himself the honor of calling. The bearer will await answer."

The bearer brought in reply the following at the bottom of the above:

"I do not remember having met Captain Amory—leastways the name—but shall be happy to have you call all the same. Better let me know when you are coming."

This was in the identical hand of the notes signed by Minnie, but plain white stationery, and not the pink-tinted, was used.

CHAPTER XXI.

STILL ANOTHER LETTER.

MATTERS were unexpectedly complicated one morning by the receipt by Mrs. Larkspur of the following letter:

"DEAR MADAM—If you will meet me on the corner of Fifty-ninth street and Seventh avenue Monday morning, between half-past ten and eleven o'clock, if it is clear, and the next clear day if it is not, I will tell you who Minnie is and her story on the receipt from you of \$50. Wear a corsage of red roses and I will introduce myself to you.

Yours truly,

MRS. WALTON.

Of course Mrs. Larkspur immediately sent for Miss Bevins, and requested that lady to see Mrs.

Walton for her, which that busybody was only too happy to do.

She appeared at the appointed place at the time indicated, wearing a corsage of red roses and after a cautious and curious glance a faded and mysterious looking woman of an uncertain age and the flashy attire of a certain disreputable class of women accosted her, after a cautious and assuring glance of recognition.

"Mrs. Larkspur, I presume?" she inquired in a harsh, unsympathetic voice.

"Yes," assented Miss Bevins.

"Have you \$50 with you?" asked the other moving away from the range of a window in one of the Navarro flats.

"Yes."

"Give it to me!"

"Here it is!" replied Miss Bevins, handing her a roll consisting of two XX and one X bills which the other clutched and quickly pocketed.

"Minnie—is Minnie Staples, who lives in the — apartments on Sixth Avenue, under the name of Mrs. Strange. Minnie and the gent have been acquainted for some years, and he used to be great spoons on her, but now wants to break with her. I think she intends to make trouble, but she can be bought easily. You might go and see her; but you must use some other name, as she is very jealous of you."

"How do you come to know about this matter?" asked Miss Bevins.

"Oh, yes. Why from her," quickly responded the other, the blush of a lie showing beneath and spreading beyond the rouge on her puffy cheeks.

"Do you know Mr. Larkspur?"

"Yes—that is by sight. I have seen him with her; but she is so jealous of him she would never introduce him to anyone."

"When did you last see them together?"

"Yesterday—yesterday afternoon."

"Is she going to stop writing the letters?"

"He is trying to get her to stop," quickly responded Mrs. Walton, taking her cue from the drift of the question.

"Could you get me a photograph of her?"

"Yes, for fifty dollars more."

"Where can I address you?"

"H—umph! In the *Herald* personal column."

"I may be able to spare the money. I should rather see her photograph than call on her. Well, I'll let you know through a personal when I want to see you again."

"Just make the meeting here," said Mrs. Walton.

"Very well," replied Miss Bevins, turning to retrace her steps.

"Now it will not do for us to separate this way," said the wily and experienced Mrs. Wal-

ton, lest we might attract the attention of passers-by. Now, you continue across and I'll keep on easterly. Just as if we had accidentally met each other," and with sublime assurance Mrs. Walton leaned over and kissed her on the cheek and moved away with the cordial familiarity of an old friend.

CHAPTER XXII.

"MINNIE."

MISS BEVINS naturally conceived a repugnance to Mrs. Walton, but she was not shrewd enough to see that she was deceived grossly by her, and she believed implicitly the story that that personage had spun for her.

After leaving her she decided that she should complete her mission, and call on Minnie Staples before returning to Mrs. Larkspur.

She walked across Sixth Avenue and down that thoroughfare to the apartment house indicated.

There, sure enough and plain enough, was Minnie Strange's name on a card in the letter box under an electric bell, indicating an apartment on the third floor.

She boldly touched the button. In a minute or so there was a click and the door opened.

Miss Bevins not without some hesitation but inspired by what she considered the sanctity of her mission, walked—there was no elevator—to the third floor, and there in an open door near the landing she encountered a woman, in a morning wrapper, who inquired:

“Who do you wish to see?”

“Miss—Mrs. Staples.”

“I am the person,” replied the other, throwing open the door and standing aside for her to enter.

Miss Bevins walked into a reception room, a cheaply furnished apartment, in which the most conspicuous objects were several highly colored chromos of Autumnal American scenery.

Portieres hid the adjoining rooms, from a remote one of which floated the voices of a man and woman evidently on very good terms with each other.

Mrs. Staples motioned her to an easy chair in the center, and inquired.

“Do you come to meet any one?”

“I want to see you.”

“Oh!”

“I am Mrs. Larkspur,” said Miss Bevins, forgetting Mrs. Walton’s admonition.

“Oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Staples, sinking into a chair near her. “He has treated me shamefully, I love him still, though.

Mrs. Staples affected to be moved to tears,

and she mopped her face with a crumpled and soiled handkerchief which she took from the folds of her gown.

Miss Bevins had a better opportunity to scan the face of the woman than in the dim light of the hallway, and found her face, if anything colder, craftier and more brazen than Mrs. Walton's, especially as the rouge seemed to have remained on over night, and she evidently wore a wig of blonde ringlets.

"He has treated me very badly," sobbed Mrs. Staples, "and such promises he made to me! One time there was nothing too good for me. But I suppose he has fallen in love with some other woman."

"But why do you not let him go? Why do you write those annoying letters?"

"Them letters?" exclaimed Mrs. Staples, a little surprised, but quickly recovering herself. "Oh, heaven! I could not restrain my feelings."

"That photograph was not yours?"

"What photograph?" inquired the other, again perplexed.

"Why, the one you sent."

"Oh, yes, now I remember. Yes, that was me—before he marred my life and robbed me of my youth."

"How long have you know Mr. Larkspur?"

"Oh, for several years—let's see—seven years."

and a perfect gent he was until recently. I cannot understand why he broke with me. Some other girl, I suppose."

"What do you propose to do?" inquired Miss Bevins, after a pause.

"Make him pay handsomely; or I will make him trouble," responded the other, who was interrupted by the sound of the door bell.

Excusing herself to Miss Bevins, she pulled the latch and went out into the hall, closing the door behind her.

Miss Bevins could hear a brief conversation between Mrs. Staples and a man, who on being requested to call later, departed, after receiving what sounded to Miss Bevins like a kiss; and Mrs. Staples returned, observing:

"I have so many callers that sometimes I cannot accommodate all;" when observing that the remark rather mystified her visitor, she added:

"He is my lawyer, come to see me about my case, but I told him you were here, and we should probably settle it between us. Won't you join me in a bottle?"

"No—no, thanks!" quickly replied Miss Bevins, beginning to regret her folly in making the visit.

"Fizz—not beer," continued Mrs. Staples. "Good fizz, too. Now won't you have a glass?"

A loud laugh in an adjoining room induced her

to go to the portiere leading into the hall and exclaim:

"Less noise, please: don't think you own this place!"

Miss Bevins thought she heard a male voice reply, "Oh, dry up!" but she was not sure, as she was beginning to be perplexed how she should terminate the interview.

Mrs. Staples sank into a chair, and gazed meditately and maliciously a few minutes on the floor, mentally deciding that she must be cautious in dealing with her visitor, whom she characterized as "a back number."

"I want money, and if I don't get it, I'll make trouble; that's all," finally said Mrs. Staples.

"How much do you want?" inquired Miss Bevins, considering the question the natural response to the remark.

"How much have you got with you?" asked the other brightening.

"Oh, only a trifle. I did not come with the idea of making a settlement."

"Oh, you just came to pry about, I suppose?"

"I came to discuss matters with you."

"Well, money talks, and that's the only kind of talk that I understand," responded Mrs. Staples, sullenly. "If I don't get money I'll make trouble, and no end of it. I've got influential friends among the politicians, and a strong pull to carry my own way. I'm all right with

the police, too; you see I know my business. But for cash you can buy this husband of yours cheap."

"Won't you name a sum?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll give Walton fifty dollars for her trouble, I'll settle for one hundred dollars. I'll never let him come near here again, and you'll never hear of me again for that amount, cash in hand," added Mrs. Staples, with an ill-concealed chuckle at her own cleverness.

"I shall be here to see you again," said Miss Bevins, rising.

"When will you call again?" asked Mrs. Staples, peremptorily.

"Probably to-morrow," said Miss Bevins, advancing toward the door.

"Well, I shall expect you."

"Good morning," and Miss Bevins darted into the hall-way and down the stairs, not breathing freely until she reached the street and had joined in the throng.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANOTHER "PERSONAL."

MISS BEVINS gave a detailed account of her interview with Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Staples to

Mrs. Larkspur, who in her excitement, was ready to condemn her husband and believe the statements of those two wretches.

"To think that he should have preferred such a creature to me!" exclaimed the wife indignantly.

To be just to Miss Bevins, however, she did not believe in either of the women, especially as now, again scanning the photograph of Minnie, she could not discover the slightest resemblance between the two, and she urged Mrs. Larkspur to confide in her husband and seek his advice.

The story was told to Mr. Larkspur when he came home to dinner, Miss Bevins remaining to add her testimony.

Much to the delight of Miss Bevins, Mr. Larkspur complimented her on her courage and sagacity, adding that he should never forget her kindness. She gave him Mrs. Walton's letter.

"I shall not bother about this one any more than about the other," said Larkspur, carefully folding Mrs. Walton's letter and placing it in his pocket. "I shall call Byrnes' attention to this one also."

And after dinner, he went to Headquarters, again ignoring the Inspector's injunction not to call on him so frequently, and laid the matter before him.

Inspector Byrnes smiled as he glanced over the letter.

"These are professionals who have somehow got onto the case through the personal. This is blackmail, pure and simple, and I don't believe there is any connection between the parties. Still there may be," he added, looking at his watch. "It's not too late to put a personal in the *Herald*, appointing a meeting with Mrs. Walton to-morrow. Go and do so. Just say: 'Mrs. W—a dash—n. Meet me to-day as yesterday. Mrs. L.' Have the lady there. Now leave the rest to me, and don't ask any questions. Good evening."

"But—"

"Now, don't ask me to tell you what I am going to do. I never tell my plans to any one. I remember as a boy reading of George Washington—the immortal George—being once asked by an aid to tell him his plans. Washington replied: 'Now, I know my plans, that's I. Now, you want me to tell you my plans, that's another I. Now two ones together form the numeral II; that's too many to be intrusted safely with any secret.' I keep my plans to myself, and that is one of the secrets of my success. Good evening."

"Good evening."

"Be sure to have the appointment kept to-morrow if it is clear, and the next day if it is not," said Inspector Byrnes, turning to a pile of papers, on his desk, as he left.

"Shall I put in the personal again to-morrow if it rains?"

"No; they'll keep the appointment the next day."

Mr. Larkspur handed the personal in at one of the uptown offices of the *Herald*, wondering why the Inspector wasted time on these people, when he had pronounced them frauds, and whether he really had a clew to the real culprits or not.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSING IN.

THE next morning Miss Bevins repaired to the meeting place of the previous day at the same hour, but she had nearly traversed the block before Mrs. Walton made her appearance, coming out of the Seventh Avenue entrance of the Park.

Mrs. Walton had been watching Miss Bevins' movements from the paved walk in the Park, where the trees completely sheltered her from view.

Mrs. Walton felicitated herself that she had made an impression on the lady and she would require her diplomatic services, but aware that the Penal Code passed by the last Legislature had an article relating to her business, she exer-

cised a natural and advisable discretion to assure herself that the lady was not accompanied or followed.

She stepped briskly up to Miss Bevins, and proposed they should stroll into an arbor she indicated in the Park, and thither they went.

Mrs. Walton told her that her friend Minnie had sent for her last evening, and she had finally induced her to promise to let up on Larkspur for \$100, to be paid to the speaker.

"Now, if you have the money about you, it's all right; if you haven't, you'd better run home and get it. I'll meet you here at one o'clock, and—"

Mrs. Walton's voice failed her; her features blanched; she clutched Miss Bevins' arm for support, and would have fallen prone from the rustic bench to the earth if that lady had not put her arm around her.

She quickly controlled herself, however, and assuming a serious tone, she said, volubly and loudly:

"What you say may be true, but I cannot help you."

Her eyes never wandered from a man who was discovered approaching around the bend in the walk—a man whose recognition almost paralyzed her.

He was Inspector Byrnes.

He sauntered along, hat down over his brow,

unlit cigar in his mouth, hands in his pockets, eyes on the ground.

He was sitting in a coupe on the corner when Mrs. Walton and Miss Bevins met, but she had not noticed him, or she would never have recognized Miss Bevins.

No one could have thought he was on business intent, so leisurely and indifferent was he, until he arrived immediately in front of them. A little back strolled one of his detectives.

"I want you," he said, abruptly turning upon them. "You know who I am," he added, addressing Mrs. Walton.

"Oh! Mr. Byrnes, what for?" she exclaimed piteously. "I have only been showing this lady the way in the Park," she said appealingly to Miss Bevins.

"I know what you are here for," said Byrnes. "Now go on ahead to Jefferson Market on a Sixth avenue car—you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Walton meekly suppressing a whimper, walking in the direction indicated, followed, or "piped," by the associate.

"You go to Mr. Larkspur and have him bring you to the Police Court on ——— th street at half-past one P. M.," said Byrnes to Miss Bevins, who until then did not breathe freely, lest she might be called upon to accompany Mrs. Walton.

"Yes, sir," replied Miss Bevins, taking a short cut to the Sixth Avenue Elevated.



CHAPTER XXV.

CAPTURED.

ALMOST simultaneously with Inspector Byrnes' appearance before Mrs. Walton, Ralston presented himself at Mrs. Staples' door, and receiving the usual salutation to strangers :

"What do you want?"

Had answered suavely:

"I want you;" and showing his authority, he, in a few words, convinced her that it was wise for her to accompany him to the Police Court to answer a charge of "Conspiring to obtain money under false pretences."

Mrs. Staples, who had had similar experiences before, was not as completely upset as Mrs. Walton, who was terrorized by the sight of the great detective, but she was perceptibly disturbed, nevertheless.

"Can't this be fixed?" she faltered, leading the way into the room, closely followed by Ralston, who was determined to be alert for any attempt to escape.

"No, nothing can be fixed. Come, be quick, or you may be too late to see your pal, Mrs. Walton, sent down-stairs—"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Staples. "Oh! it's that Larkspur case. I thought that would bring

us trouble ; but I'm innocent, I am, unless she convinces the jury I'm in with her. But I am not !”

“Come, I say ; be quick. You want to talk to the judge, not to me !” answered Ralston gruffly and impatiently.

Mrs. Staples touched the button of an electric bell, and almost instantly a stout and elderly negress appeared.

“Bring me my bonnet and cloak,” she said, observing to Ralston as the negress disappeared, “I know you would not want to let me out of your sight ; you see how considerate I am !”

The negress reappeared with a stylish velvet cloak and a bonnet to match ; Mrs. Staples plumped herself down on a chair, and, with the aid of a small hand mirror, proceeded to arrange her hair and adjust her bonnet, observing, as she thrust out her feet :

“Button my shoes,” which the negress, kneeling, proceeded to do with a silver-handled button hook which she took from the table.

Mrs. Staples, without more ado, meekly accompanied Ralston to the Police Court, where she was confronted by Mrs. Walton, in charge of Inspector Byrnes.

“It's all up with us !” she whispered to Mrs. Walton, “If he's got onto us !” meaning that the great detective always bagged his game.

I will not weary the reader, nor is it pertinent

to my story to chronicle the details of the conviction of the two women on Miss Bevins' testimony. They were each fined \$300 and sentenced for one year. There was a strong political influence exerted in their favor, but Byrnes' determined prosecution of the case secured the verdict.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. BLACK UNMASKED.

THE conviction of the conspirators, Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Staples, did not furnish any evidence to Mrs. Larkspur that she was not just in her charges against her husband, and her suspicions and her intention to obtain a divorce became stronger than ever: especially as the great Inspector Byrnes, who had been so active in the case of the two women, had been working several weeks with the evidence of the letters without apparently finding the slightest clue.

As the thirty days rolled round she became decided, she would insist on a divorce, as the calm, or philosophic indifference of her husband, growing out of his confidence that Inspector Byrnes would in good time vindicate him, rather nettled her.

The twenty-eighth day dawned and still there

were no tidings, and but for Inspector Byrnes' repeated injunction that he should not come to him until sent for, Larkspur could not have restrained his curiosity.

The next morning, soon after his arrival at the office, he was summoned by Inspector Byrnes by the following dispatch :

"Come to me at once.

"BYRNES."

He went immediately to Headquarters, finding the Inspector impatiently awaiting him.

Rising immediately that he entered the office, Inspector Byrnes led the way to the prison rooms "below," and indicated a cell, and for him to look in the grated window.

Larkspur peered into the little apartment and discovered sitting on the cot bedstead a faded, blond-haired young woman, who looked the picture of despair, dejectedly gazing on the floor, almost unmindful of his presence.

"Who is that?" he inquired, turning to Inspector Byrnes, who, with his hands stuck characteristically into his pockets (an indication, by the way, students of character say, of secrecy and secretive habits).

"Minnie!"

"Never saw her before in my life!" responded Larkspur, taking another glance, this time attracting her attention.

"What's the matter with you? I don't know you!" shouted the indignant prisoner.

Inspector Byrnes took Larkspur's arm and led him upstairs again, though not back into his office, but by a side door out into the main corridor, crossing which he inserted a key in a door, opening which he thrust Larkspur in ahead of himself, and closing the door as if to guard against an escape, an action more the result of force of habit than any necessity of discretion in this case.

Larkspur found himself in a large, square room, arranged like a museum.

In cases against the walls and on tables were displayed all the paraphernalia of a burglar's complete outfit, including the tools employed in the robbery of the Manhattan Savings Institution, the detection of which won Inspector Byrnes his distinction as the smartest detective on the force.

In this room, known as the "museum," is stored all the trophies of the captured burglars, firebugs, gambling raids, etc., etc., properly labelled.

The room is sometimes used to detain parties awaiting examination by the Inspector in his room across the hall.

Larkspur's attention was attracted by the figure of a man in an alcove with his back toward them, evidently trying to escape the attention of those who came in.

"Here," said Inspector Byrnes, in a voice of command.

The figure turned.

"Mr.—Mr. Black!" exclaimed Larkspur, moving toward him.

Byrnes caught him by the shoulder.

"Larkspur!" said Black, advancing, but pausing on a glance from Inspector Byrnes.

"Silence!" shouted Inspector Byrnes: "there is the author of all your misery, sir!"

He then proceeded to hurriedly recite to Larkspur all the details of Ralston's shadowing Black; the investigation of his flat and the discovery of the photographic plate, the original prepared photograph for copying, the pink-tinted note-paper, the relations of Black and the unfortunate girl down-stairs, and the conclusive evidence that she was used as a cat's-paw to write the letters.

A more abject picture of humiliation and degradation than Black presented at different stages of the recital cannot be imagined.

He actually shook with terror and cowed like a supplicant after confession of some horrible wrong, aware that he was not entitled to mercy.

Larkspur became like a statue, his face bleaching almost to the hue of colorless marble.

"What have you to say for yourself, you scoundrel?" suddenly exclaimed Larkspur, ad-

vancing toward the miserable object of his wrath and indignation as if to strike him.

Inspector Byrnes however, caught him by the arm and pulled him back.

Black controlled himself with a perceptible effort, and managed to sputter out :

"I loved your wife before you married her. She—she—discarded me for you—because she thought, knew you had more money than I had—!"

"Scoundrel!"

"I could not endure your happiness : I envied you your happiness ; in an evil moment, not calculating on the extent of the injury, I sought to sow a little discord—."

The wretch fell to the floor in a swoon.

Inspector Byrnes took Larkspur by the arm and led him out of the room back into his own.

In the hallway he ordered an attendant to go in and assist the suffering man.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INSPECTOR BYRNES' MOTTO.

"Now," said Inspector Byrnes, as they took seats in his office, "I believe always in tempering justice with mercy. I am always inclined to be easy with the first offence. Those two women are old offenders, reg'lar professionals, and consequently I had no mercy for them. Now, in the

case of Black, he is not a professional: he was inspired by revenge and not blackmail, and I'll answer that he'll not again attempt anything of the kind as malicious anonymous letter writing."

"I can scarcely trust my senses," observed Mr. Larkspur. "I considered him one of my sincerest friends."

"If you wish to press charges against him," continued Inspector Byrnes, "you can send him to Sing Sing, but it will bring you into unpleasant notoriety, and—"

"I'll take any advice you give, Inspector," interrupted Larkspur.

"Well, now that the mystery can be cleared satisfactorily to your wife, and the mischief settled, you'll not make any charges against Black or his accomplice, and I'll dismiss them with a lecture that will last them the rest of their lives, especially as I shall tell them I shall keep an eye on them, and if I ever catch them in any crooked work again I'll railroad them without mercy."

Soon afterward, after Larkspur had left, Black and his confederate were released, and, haunted by the guilty conscience that made it misery for him to encounter on the street any of the parties, Black and the woman shortly went to Europe, where they remain in obscurity on the Continent, while the happy reunion of the Larkspurs that evening has continued unbroken ever since.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMANCE OF BROADWAY.

BROADWAY! One of the great streets of the world; the great central thoroughfare of the great Empire City.

Thoroughly cosmopolitan in its diversity of architecture as well in its sign-boards, it is a good index to the varied and complex life of the great metropolis of the New World; the story of its growth from a country lane that crossed a stream that almost made an island of that portion below the present Canal Street is the history of the progress of one of the greatest cities in the world.

It is kaleidoscopic in its variety of architecture; it is a moving panorama of humanity and traffic.

Broadway is not only the great central business thoroughfare of the Empire City—for such it continues to be, though the day is perhaps not distant when the already commenced extension of Fifth Avenue (which will divide the city its entire length from the Battery to the Harlem

River) will make that the great centripetal point in the metropolis—but it is also the popular resort, where Vice and Virtue, the Rich and the Poor meet on common ground with the votaries of Fashion, and representatives of Pride,—the Busy and the Idle.

A more heterogeneous throng than that to be found on Broadway it is not possible to see anywhere in this country, and nowhere else except in the grand thoroughfares on the continent.

Broadway is a microcosm, which worships Mammon, and is governed by enterprise.

What intrigues for good and for evil engross the minds in this microcosm, God alone only knows. The battle between the Weak and the Strong or Might *vs.* Right is perpetual, and decisive.

On a bright, balmy, beautiful afternoon of a past year, the throng was unusually large, as a parade of the popular Seventh Regiment had attracted a great concourse to the promenade.

Observed by all as she passed, for a certain indescribable charm or attraction of personality, as well as for the majesty of her bearing, and her exquisitely moulded features, and noble eye, as black as her abundant hair, was a young lady, who walked in the throng like one in a strange land, knowing no one and known by none.

And she was known to none; excepting by sight to loungers as one who occasionally graced the promenade.

She was usually attired in a fashionably made black-silk, and the all pervading majesty of manner (not exactly giving the impression that she was born or accustomed to command, so much as of intense self-respect and dignity) made her appear older than she was; for the youthfulness of her symmetrical figure indicated that she was still in girlhood.

She generally appeared on the promenade early in the afternoon, before the throng accumulated, and walked slowly and with an easy grace, indicating habits of luxury and refinement, with head erect and perchance if rudely stared at by a passer by or loungeur, a slight expression of contempt or disdain on her proud, noble face; and, guileless and innocent, she passed in the throng, as I have said, like one in a strange land—in the throng yet not one of them.

And she was a stranger in a strange land; but I shall not interrupt the progress of my narrative to recite her history, which will be given in good time.

She has just passed or turned the corner of Broadway and Fourteenth Street, on her way uptown, and is nearly in front of the celebrated "Maison Doree," (whilom the rival of Delmonico), which stood midway between Broadway and University Place, where several young men, evidently under the influence of the wines they have been imbibing within, descend the steps of

that gilded mansion, reaching the sidewalk immediately as she approaches.

"There she is!" exclaims one, "there she is—the beautiful, mysterious unknown—my toast! I must know her; I will speak to her!" and he breaks away from one of his companions who on the instant attempts but fails to catch his arm, to stay him, and with unsteady steps he advances toward the young lady, who as yet does not perceive him.

Another of his comrades springs after him and clutches him by the arm.

"George, remember! you are a gentleman," he remarks hastily, but too late.

The other eludes his grasp, and stands before the lady.

"Miss!" he begins, and then abashed at his own impudence, he hesitates and finally blurts out, "I do not wish to insult you, but I must know your name!"

"Sir!" she indignantly replies, manifesting remarkable self-control; for it is evident by her flashing eyes and suppressed emotion she feels keenly the insult.

She quickly steps back, evidently expecting that his comrades will take him away; but the others now approach, and one of them at least is evidently of the same mind as him they called "George," for he darts to his side, and assumes a menacing attitude.

The passers stop and partially form a circle around them—if you were to stop and look intently into a clear sky a crowd would gather about you on Broadway—but not one of them is manly enough to interfere and protect the lady, who glances appealingly around her.

“Will some one call an officer?” exclaims the lady finally, fairly quivering with emotion, and then suddenly turning and confronting the young ruffian, who was almost dazed by her expression of indignation and contempt, which seemed immediately to absorb every faculty.

“This is outrageous!” exclaims a manly voice, from a new addition to the group, and in an instant the hot-headed young man receives over the shoulder of a boy a blow in the face which sends him reeling into the arms of his friends and then to the sidewalk; and immediately a stalwart young Hercules in the form of a young gentleman of fashion with a handsome face and urbane manner, steps forward.

A police officer simultaneously appearing, the affair is amicably and immediately settled, his comrades taking the injured young man back into the “Maison Doree,” not daring, of course, to make any charge against the one who had struck him.

That gentleman, comprehending the situation in a moment, quickly hands his card—Alfred Ray, assistant cashier F—— Bank, to the nearest

one of the party, and then, turning to the lady who has waited to thank him, he says :—

“ Allow me to put you into an omnibus ! ”

“ If you please, sir ! ” she answers perceptibly embarrassed ; “ for many of the recent crowd have the impertinence to still linger on the scene.

A stage rolls or lolls up ; he hails it ; it stops ; but (as usual) away out in the middle of the street.

She allows him to conduct her to the stage ; and then to assist her in mounting the steps.

“ O thank you, sir ; thank you ! ” she exclaimed as he closes the door on her, and lifts his hat as the stage rolls away.

And thus they separate, neither of them ever expecting to see the other again ; but how little do we poor mortals know what the morrow may bring forth ?

CHAPTER II.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE stage had almost reached its destination up-town ere the young lady alighted.

The elegant brown-stone mansion to which she repaired on alighting was within a stone's throw of the avenue.

As if apprehensive of being followed she dropped into a feeble run.

The door was opened for her by an elderly gentleman who perceived her approach from the window of the parlor.

On this door was a massive silver plate, with the name Verrua in Roman letters: Verrua! That name was her name! Spanish. Her beauty was Spanish.

"Oh, father,—thank you!" she said, bounding in.

"Estelle!" he exclaimed affectionately.

So she was named Estelle Verrua.

He closed the door and leaned over and she kissed him tenderly on the forehead.

"Had a nice walk, my darling?" he inquired.

"Yes, father," she replied, passing on with the intention of going upstairs.

She was flushed and nervous from her recent excitement, which had not yet entirely passed away and noticing this, the father hastily detaining her by affectionately placing his hand on her shoulder, exclaimed:

"Has anything happened—you look flurried."

She hesitated to reply; there was a reason which the reader will, I imagine, readily surmise for not telling him of the occurrence in the street.

"You have been walking fast;" he said sharply. "like these American women!"

"Only from the omnibus!" she hastily replied, wishing to avoid answering the previous question.

"Ah yes," he said musingly. "But you should not do so; it may be injurious to your health. And prevents grace and ease," he added.

"I will not do so again," she responded laughingly; then she embraced and kissed him again and again; for motherless since a babe, he was all in all to her, and she was devoted to him.

Oh, if she had known what thoughts filled his mind—caused the frown that disappeared in her presence, would not the blister of shame which would mantle her cheek turn her love into hate and cause her to scorn him; or would not the kindred blood running in their veins inspire one as the other and bind them closer by the common bond of crime?

If she had known that he was a fallen man whose only redeeming trait was his love for her would she not have pushed him away in scorn, and have wished to never see him again or assist in spending his ill-gotten gains?

But she knew nothing of his dark history, as will hereafter appear.

"I will not do so again," she continued and releasing him she hastened away upstairs.

"Dinner will soon be ready," he called after her.

"All right," she responded from the head of the stairs.

He returned to the sumptuous parlor and resumed with bent head a meditative promenade.

"It is all for her sake! for her sake!" he muttered. "We must not fail! We must not fail!"

He paced the room, like an officer on the quarter-deck, in silence, till there was a violent pull at the door-bell and then he went to the door and listened.

A maid servant instantly responded to the summons and admitted a gentleman, who entered with an ease and familiarity that indicated he was no stranger.

"Ah! Mead," said Senor Verrua, opening the door, "come in."

The other entered without ceremony.

"I expected a dispatch," said the elder, closing the door, "rather than to see you."

"I had spare time, wanted exercise and I thought I would come myself, and here I am."

"So I perceive."

"Senorita in?" inquired the other with a pantomimic shrug of his shoulders indicating upstairs, if anything.

"Yes, but—" replied the father, evidently displeased.

"Oh, never mind; don't call her. I have not time to wait; didn't come to see her; merely thought I'd ask after her, that's all. Will pay my respects to her another time."

He would probably have continued in this strain had not the other checked him by the impatient exclamation:

"Well, how are matters?"

"All right."

"There is no time for delay. I learned this morning down town that the deposit may be drawn at any moment."

"So did I," responded the visitor, drawing his chair closer and becoming more confidential. "Everything is arranged, and we commence operations to-night."

"Good!"

"The tunnel will be a tough job, but Hans has fixed everything very comfortably."

"Good," said the other, musingly.

"I will superintend the work personally."

"What?"

"Yes; the stake is too large to be endangered by carelessness."

"But consider,—your position—you are rash—really, I don't like this!"

"There is no risk, and, as I said before, the stake is large—well, you understand."

"If you were to ask my advice I should argue to the contrary."

"Thank you, but I have made up my mind."

"I still think you are very rash."

"Time will show. But now I must be going. I rather like the adventure. It is a new experience. When a boy I always said I should be a second Claude Duval or Lafitte or Kidd. Who knows what this adventure may lead to?"

Perceiving that this strain was not pleasant to the other, who was evidently much agitated mentally, he paused, and then added :

“ You will not expect me till you see me ! ”

“ No ; for whatever happens I do not suppose you will write to me,” the other responded uneasily.

“ No, indeed. But you need have no apprehensions of my compromising you that way.”

The other brightened at this, observing affably :

“ You have evidently considered the subject in all its bearings.”

“ Yes, that I have. But I am loitering,” and he led the way to the door. At the door he added, “ Remember me to your daughter,” with a meaning look.

CHAPTER III.

SENOR VERRUA.

“ I DO not like this work at all ! ” Verrua exclaimed when once more in the privacy of the parlor, which he paced as before. “ I was rash ; yes, insane, to have proposed it ! O what would Estelle say if she knew all ! ” He shuddered at the thought, but quickly controlling himself he added, “ It is for her sake ! for her sake ! But I

shall be glad when it is over. If we fail—oh, I cannot admit of the thought of failure !”

Tall, slender, gray, with a majestic rather than haughty bearing, *à la militaire*, and a reserved, self-reliant manner, Senor Verrua would have attracted attention in almost any assemblage. There was the wild fire of the visionary or man of destiny in his coal-black eyes ; and it needed not a second scrutiny of his face to convince any reader of character that he was a man who had been accustomed to command, and one who was capable of bold, daring deeds, for good or evil. His history was a romance.

He was a scion of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in Spain. In early life he was in the army, and was as gay, venturesome, rollicking a young blade as ever donned uniform. His parents sought to ally him by marriage to an ancient and opulent house, the equal of his own ; but having become enamoured in Lisbon of a young French actress, he would not comply with their wishes. Quite the contrary ; he married the young actress. Of course, his family disowned him. Retiring from the army he ran a wild career of dissipation while accompanying his wife on her professional tour. He soon spent the few thousands that she brought him in marriage, and her current earnings were not sufficient for such a course of life. Had it not been for her firmness and foresight his indiscretion and extravagance

would have bankrupted her. She returned to Paris after her tour, and here he sought to engage in business, but not trained to any by education, this was no easy matter. The empire was at peace, and the army offered no opening for him. But his wife could still support him, and loving him she was cheerful to do so. She did better in Paris than while travelling, and he continued his stylish mode of living. He constantly hoped for forgiveness from his family and restoration to their favor. He was devoted to his wife, and fondly anticipated the day when he could take her from the stage to his paternal home. Cherishing this idea he probably never thought of the gross injustice he was doing his wife in squandering her hard earnings in living beyond their means; or, if he had, would likely have argued that it would not be for long. But his family continued silent; and he was too proud to seek a reconciliation. Towards the close of the year his wife was compelled to temporarily retire from the boards to give birth to a child; and in bringing this little one into life she lost her own. * * * He did not wish to remain in Paris after this deplorable event, nor to return to Spain. He decided to come to New York. The dying mother asked a friend of her youth, Mme. Costelli, a destitute young widow, to be the guardian or proxy-mother of the new-born babe, and this lady accompanied the infant and father to New York,

because since a few months before she had become an inmate of his household she had been dependent on him for support.

Senor Verrua came to New York in the hope that in the better opportunities here he might engage in business. He had a turn for mechanism, and with the intention of beginning a new and more useful life, would gladly have entered any branch in this line, satisfied he could work his way up. All he sought was a comfortable living for himself and little family ; he flattered himself he had got over his luxurious habits. If the opportunity had offered, I believe he would have shown himself sincere in his new ambition and made himself a worthy man. But man proposes—you know the rest. The best intentions are frustrated sometimes by circumstances ; and instead of engaging in some honorable business that would in time yield him the wealth and position he coveted, Verrua almost inevitably drifted into associations with men who were veritable wolves in sheep's clothing, in that under a polished exterior they carried the black heart of the knave and constantly engaged in criminal transactions, which, by their very boldness and magnitude, were successful. The "gang" was one of the most extensive and bold ever organized for floating counterfeit bonds and notes and bank robbing when occasion offered. Mead was the leader until he discovered that Verrua's social position

and executive ability was better than his own when he gracefully abdicated in his favor, being his trusted lieutenant. Verrua ruled his band like a prince, never meeting the subordinates, but issuing his orders through Mead, who displayed great ability in utilizing the information the other obtained through his social position.

Once more wealth was at his command, and Verrua, forgetting his resolutions of a change probably because there was no longer any necessity for them, launched out in a style of great splendor.

He never despaired of a reconciliation with his family, of whom he kept himself informed, and he reared his daughter, the beautiful Estelle, in the belief that he had been compelled to leave Spain in consequence of a political intrigue ; that he lived on his income from his estates there, and that some day he should take her to her home in Madrid.

Shortly previous to the commencement of this story he had written to his aged father asking that the past be forgotten and to be allowed to become one of the family again for his daughter's sake ; and had received a reply in which the inexorable old man declined to receive him, but offered to gladly welcome the daughter. This dashed his hopes of a reconciliation, and he resolved to make no reply to the latter.

He was always an impulsive and daring man,

but he now became utterly reckless. Mead had asked permission to woo the daughter, and he gave it; though probably before receiving the letter when his hopes of a reconciliation were strong, he would have insultingly denied the presumptuous request, for such, having considerable family pride, he would have regarded it.

Adversity had fallen on the company and their recent speculations had proved costly failures; and Verrua could not afford to part with Mead, and this was another reason why he should consent to his marriage with his adored daughter. That Estelle would accept him neither the father nor the suitor doubted, for he was the only gentleman she had seen much of socially, and she evidently thought well of him; and regarding her acceptance as a matter of course, they had decided to make a desperate effort for a fortune, and then, after the marriage to remove to California and begin a new life. But the opportunity to make the *coup* did not come. The since celebrated detective, Pinkerton, was winning his spurs at the time and he had frustrated several of their schemes without being able to detect or expose the gang, and they had transferred their operations from the West to this city, under the very nose of the aristocratic chief. Funds were running low in the exchequer, and their condition was daily growing more desperate for men of such extravagant habits when Verrua learned of

the deposit of a fortune in gold in the F—— bank by the Wall Street clique that was running the corner in specie that culminated in the celebrated "Black Friday" financial collapse some years ago. Gold cannot be identified or traced like bonds, and Verrua, at Mead's suggestion, resolved to rob the F—— bank, that is the "gang" should do so. Verrua had long been a depositor in the F—— bank, and his acquaintance with the officials enabled him to learn all the particulars of the deposit.

The conversation between Mead and Verrua, detailed in the previous chapter, related to this affair, so that their plans were well matured.

The father regretted his participation in the affair, which he proposed in a reckless moment, when he thought of the disastrous consequences of a failure on his daughter more than himself, and he would now like to withdraw.

It was too late now, however, to withdraw, and allowing the assurances of Mead to encourage him, he banished the unpleasant thoughts from his mind for a time.

"He is a fine fellow," he said, "and I will stand by him. Situated as she is, she cannot make a better match. I will speak to her this evening." He continued to nervously pace the apartment. "I might marry her off to a rich husband by taking her to the fashionable watering places next summer. Her beauty would ren-

der her the belle wherever she went ; but no, this would be a sacrifice, too much like leading the lamb to slaughter. If, however, she doesn't love Mead I shall not urge his suit. But I think I can rely on her acceptance of him. It is time she should marry ! The watering places is not a bad idea ! ”

Estelle interrupted this soliloquy by entering ; and he touched the bell-handle in the corner, and gayly chattered with her about a prima donna they had heard the night before at the Academy of Music whose *début* in Milan he had years ago witnessed, until a servant announced dinner ; and they repaired to an extension dining-room, concealed by heavy damask curtains, which the attendant proceeded to draw.

In this room, in the act of overlooking the table to see that all was right, was Mme. Costelli, a medium-sized, dark haired and eyed woman, who moved about in such a reserved, quiet way that naturally a mystery attached itself to all her movements. She sat at the head of the table and continued to preside over the household even now that Estelle had reached an age when she could properly assume the duties herself. It may be in place, but I shall not pause now to describe Mme. Costelli or recite her strange history. She was a shadowy woman in her quiet manner and noiseless movements ; and in this household she kept very much in the shadow, for

there was little companionship between her and her charge, and next to none with the father (although that was not her fault). And I will let her remain in the shadowy realms of obscurity until it is time for her to come forth.

The repast over father and daughter returned to the parlors, the curtains being closed after them by the servant; Mme. Costelli remained in the dining-room.

After a few casual remarks, the father observed pleasantly:

"Mead called a little while ago. On learning you were resting from your promenade he would not disturb you. He left his regards for you."

"Yes," she observed.

"Estelle," he began, awkwardly, "suppose I should tell you I intend to change my mind and never return to Spain,—you will have to get married here."

His words at first startled her, but an expression of pleasure soon followed on her face that of surprise.

"Yes, I will have to get married here," she found herself saying before she knew what she was doing; speaking as well as thinking.

"It is about time you should be thinking of marrying," he said, after a pause.

She blushed, but made no reply.

"Not that I am in a hurry to get you off my hands," he resumed, speaking slowly and evi-

dently undecided what to say next, "because you must still remain in my house."

There was a pause. The maiden was evidently pleasantly occupied with her own thoughts; the father anxiously watched her.

He began again :

"I have perceived your growing attachment for Mr. Mead. He is a very worthy young gentleman, and your course meets with my hearty approval."

"Why, father, what are you talking about?" she exclaimed, in dismay.

"Are you not in love with Mr. Mead?" he inquired, eagerly.

"No," she responded, hastily and firmly.

"I supposed you were," he retorted.

"I have never that I am aware of given either you or him any reason to think so," she said, hotly. "Have I?" she added.

"No—yes," he stammered in reply.

"I have treated him courteously and kindly as a friend of yours—that is all."

"Then you do not like him?"

"I do not love him. I have no dislike towards him," she replied.

"I thought you did, but I see I am mistaken. Well, let us say no more about this. Forget that we have had this conversation; it will be best." He spoke hurriedly and confusedly.

"Do you wish me to marry Mead?" she asked after a pause.

"No—yes," he replied. "I want you to suit yourself. I want you to marry the man you love!"

She rushed to him and threw her arms around his neck and rapturously kissed him several times before she exclaimed:

"God bless you for those words! God bless you for those words!"

"But," he instantly added, "I should like to see you marry Mead!"

This checked her ardor somewhat, and she allowed him to lead her back to the sofa.

"But I do not wish to control you!"

"You should not," she said, determinedly; showing herself to be possessed of as much will and self-reliance as himself.

After a few turns of the room, he approached and kissed her, saying, "I am going out for a walk; but do not sit up for me, as I may remain out late."

"Good-night," she said, returning the kiss fervently, and accompanying him to the hall.

If he had opened the door suddenly they might have perceived Mme. Costelli dart away upstairs, and surmised the truth that she had been listening. She glided away noiselessly up the stairs, and paused and watched them from over the banisters.

"Ah!" she sighed, as Estelle closed the door on him, "if she would only wed Mead! If she were to marry and leave this roof then there would be room in his heart for me—for me, whom he does not deign now to even notice any more than the furniture in the room. Ah! will the day ever come when I shall call him husband? Am I nursing a delusive hope? Had not poor dead Estelle this in her mind when she said, 'Be a mother to my babe?' Yes, I shall reign in this house yet."

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG LOVE'S DREAM.

WITH her father and Mme. Costelli Estelle lived a sort of isolated life; for, although she went out at will, going riding in the Park or promenading in Broadway, she was acquainted with none except such as shopping brought her in contact with, and such as her music teacher, drawing-master and Mead, because all the friendly overtures of the neighbors had been consistently repulsed by Mme. Costelli, acting under instructions from the father, who had not cared to form any social ties here.

In the neighborhood they passed as the "Spanish family," and nothing being known

against them they were respected, and soon left to themselves, as they desired to be. It is a trite maxim that, "one-half the world does not know how the other half lives," and especially is this true in a cosmopolitan city, like New York.

Estelle fairly idolized her father, and was contented with his companionship. As intimated, there was little sympathy between her and Mme. Costelli. Her father had educated her through a course of reading, and they were much together.

The subject of marriage had never been discussed by them until the conversation just detailed. Cherishing in her mind from her father's representations a delusion of wealth and power, she always had an idea that when they went to their estates in Spain there would be found waiting a nobleman who would make her his bride, as in the fairy tale.

Thrown much into the society of Mead she had come to like him, to use a homely but good phrase, but that was all. Probably, however, if she had never seen Mr. Ray, she might have learned to love Mead, especially if it was her father's wish that she should; but though her knowledge or acquaintance with the other gentleman dated back but a few hours, the moment her father spoke to her she decided she could never love Mead.

Since she had seen Mr. Ray his image engrossed her thoughts; and the while her father

was speaking to her, she mentally drew a personal comparison between him and Mead, much to the advantage, it is needless to say, of the former. Strange coincidence of fate, Ray was the cashier of the bank to be robbed.

Afterwards, in the privacy of her own apartment, a splendid suite on the second floor, she determined if she ever married it should be to Mr. Ray.

Man boasts of and vaunts his love; woman quite the contrary, and she did not give as explicit an explanation to her father, from whom she had never before concealed a thought, as she might have done.

“I will wait till we see him some night at the opera or theatre,” she said musingly, “and then I will tell father that is the man I love and want to marry, and then he can get introduced to him and bring him to our box to be presented to me !”

CHAPTER V.

TUNNELLING THE F—— BANK.

THE F—— bank, a massive edifice, stood on the corner of two of the most popular thoroughfares in the lower portion of the city. There was an entrance on both streets. Reared some years ago the building was devoted to the one purpose

of the bank; there were no offices over it or stores underneath it. On either side of the doors were two large plate-glass windows, and overhead there was a lofty, dome-like skylight. The vault was in the centre, the entrance being in the middle of the space occupied by the desks and enclosed by a railing.

The only safe way the vault could be reached by the burglars was by the tunnelling process, which is tedious, dangerous and expensive, and not always practicable. A business part of the city, the neighborhood was quite deserted after night-fall, and this was favorable to the tunnelling process.

A Swede who had formerly manufactured the dies for the counterfeits of the company, and who was smart enough albeit he appeared to be so stupid, was duly installed in a cellar store adjoining the bank as a florist. Soon sweet-scented roses bloomed in his windows, over which coursed luxuriant vines. Hans understood floriculture; that was once his business. The florist business was selected in order to be able to account for the odor of fresh earth which would pervade the place after the tunnelling commenced.

A subterranean excavation was to be made to the vault of the bank. First, there was to be made an excavation—a large round hole—about twenty feet in circumference and about twelve feet in depth, in order to fix the grade, as the

cellar was half out the ground, that is to say above the pavement, while the bank was built flat on the grade.

The cellar was divided into two apartments by a heavy board partition, carefully papered, completely enclosing noise and light, so that the attention of any chance passer-by would not be attracted. In the rear Hans pretended to live, and it was poorly furnished as a chamber and living room.

At first the digging progressed rather slowly, yet the excavation in the cellar was made in a few hours, five men being engaged, three to dig, and two to pack the earth away.

So systematically was the work done that a circular board casing was built as the tunnel was opened, in order to prevent the earth from falling in.

The tunnel was about ten feet in circumference, and ran at a depth of eight feet below the level of the pavement.

A dark lantern, opened now, of course, shed its scintillation upon the cave, which was strange and weird.

The lantern was held by the hand, so that its light could be shut off in an instant if footsteps were heard on the pavement in the silence of the night. The work was conducted in perfect silence, Mead giving his orders in pantomime.

After a night's hard, tedious labor in the sub-

terranean excavation a stone wall was unearthed—the stone wall stood between them and the treasure.

When the wall was reached, and the board lining was placed, the men retired to the “home-base,” as the first excavation was called, and Mead, who had been managing the lantern, went into the tunnel and made an inspection of the stone wall.

According to his calculations, this wall should have been at least four feet further in.

An expression of dismay settled on his face when he made the soundings, that is to say tapped the wall to ascertain its width. It returned a dull, heavy sound, indicative of great thickness.

He beckoned one of the men to his side and intimated to him in pantomime to sound the wall also.

The man carefully tapped the wall in four different places with the same result as Mead.

Mead looked at his watch, and found that it was quarter past four A. M.—had they not been so intent at their work they might have heard a neighboring church clock when it struck the hour.

Apprising them of the hour by holding his watch up he signified them to quit work; and they doffed their overalls and slept till Hans came and awoke them.

Mead slept in a chair and was left by the others in a somnolent state.

When he awoke Hans gave him his breakfast in a tin can, such as laboring-men carry.

The meal over he glanced at his watch, and muttered to himself:—

“It is about their opening time;” and cautiously descended into the “home-base,” thence into the tunnel, taking along a small stool, which he placed beside the wall, and sat on.

For some minutes all was as silent as the tomb; a deathly stillness, in fact, prevailing.

Presently a slight, muffled noise was detected in the bank; and Mead’s face brightened.

The step became more distinct and then was heard the opening of a door—an iron railing door, to judge by the noise it made when it closed.

“That’s the gate leading to the desks,” said Mead to himself.

A similar noise was heard.

“That’s the gate at the head of the stairs,” he muttered, crouching close to the wall.

Someone was heard descending the steps.

“He is coming down-stairs,” thought Mead, whose sense of hearing was very acute after much such practice.

After a fumbling of keys,—very indistinctly heard—and drawing of bolts, a heavy door rolled back slowly.

"That's the vault door," muttered Mead breathlessly, placing his ear close to the wall, and listening attentively.

The muffled sound of distance characterized the man's movements in the vault, and it was evident by the variable expressions of Mead's face that he was perplexed.

Now a smile of satisfaction radiated his features and then he appeared annoyed and looked at the wall angrily as if he thought of tearing it to pieces with his hands.

He was soon satisfied that he had not miscalculated the thickness of the wall, because when two persons came into the vault, he could not hear their voices while their steps were discernible.

Mead remained in the tunnel till he had satisfied himself as to the exact bearings in the interior of the vault; and passed the remainder of the day in sleeping and eating, his meals being brought to him regularly by Hans.

His associates returned after nightfall and renewed work.

But they had no longer to dig earth; they had to pick with a sharp iron instrument bits of hard, dry mortar out from between the stones—a large square about in the centre being very neatly loosened after several hours patient drilling, punching and scraping.

The stone was removed—and there was

another obstacle in a mass of loose stones, the filling in between the two walls.

This loose material was removed and on examination proved that the second wall or lining of the vault was even more formidable than the first.

But they were not discouraged; on the contrary they worked with increased energy.

The opening in the wall was made large enough to easily admit a man by removing two more stones.

All hands engaged in removing to the home-base the loose stuff that now fell, rattled down in a hail shower in fact.

At length, however, the place was cleared for the next, and perhaps, most difficult operation; and a man crawled into the opening and commenced digging away a stone from the other wall.

This hole was so small and close that each man could only work a few moments, but the prospect of speedily gaining the treasure inspired them and they worked like beavers.

At last the mortar was chipped and picked out, and the stone was drawn out by means of two long, slender bits of iron.

The sight that met their eager gaze into the orifice left by the stone caused the men to lose control of themselves, and they passionately stamped the ground and wildly gesticulated—to speak they dared not.

A solid wall of iron was discovered to be beyond the second wall; it was the back of the safe, which was built in the wall.

All their work had been in vain.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER PLAN.

MEAD called on Senor Verrua at his residence in the morning, and detailed the circumstances of their failure.

"I was very rash to instigate this scheme," exclaimed Verrua, "and wish I had never thought of it!"

"Why what has come over you!" exclaimed the other. "It sounds strange to hear you talking like this!"

"I am thinking about my daughter," hastily responded Verrua. "If I were alone I should go to work personally; like yourself, I should enjoy the adventure. But think of the consequences of failure and detection!"

"Don't think of it then!" responded the other. "Don't think of it then!"

"I try not; but gloomy forebodings will crowd into my mind," replied Verrua, brightening, however.

"We've gone too far to back out now," said

Mead. "Come what may I'll pursue the game to the end."

"Have you any other scheme to propose?"

"Blasting!"

"Hazardous!"

Mead was thoughtfully silent.

"All your attempts to be taken into the vault during the daytime have failed?" the senor broke the silence by inquiring.

"Yes," responded Mead. "Very few are so favored," he added.

Senor Verrua took from his pocket a memorandum book—filled with numerals and sums—apparently; for the jottings were veritable figures of speech, and added up revealed other information than merely arithmetical.

"The dome, around which runs a gallery, is about ten feet below the skylight; and there is a small stairs running thence to the dome," he read from these figures.

"Yes; but the windows on both sides would prevent working that way," said Mead.

Verrua was musingly silent.

"There are two private watchmen on the block," continued Mead, "to be seen after, besides the policeman and any chance passers-by?"

Still the other continued silent.

"The watchmen are in the habit of resting in a coffee and cake saloon on the other corner of the street," said Mead.

"Precisely," observed Senor Verrua, "and would not refuse a friendly glass with a stranger, a sailor say, who might happen to drop in?"

"Not likely," was Mead's comment.

"Any passers-by can be engaged in a fight before they get near enough to the bank to make a discovery," continued Senor Verrua.

"Yes," assented Mead.

"If there is any disturbance depend upon it the policeman is not likely to show himself in the vicinity," resumed the senor.

"No! not likely."

"I should prefer the passers-by in the street to be gagged with shoemaker's wax," said the senor, "rather than to resort to violence for so slight a cause."

"Hans will attend to that," replied Mead, gladly assuming control of the affair, which Verrua seemed inclined to shirk from a moral (?) cowardice he had never before exhibited. Mead was an inferior man in every respect to the other; though he was keen and shrewd and persevering; a perfect brute when roused. He was in love now, however, with Estelle, and quite tame. He was a well-built, muscular man, prematurely aged by dissipation evidently. He had the appearance of a man who had lived fast in his youth, and had now settled down to systematic high living, which imparted a vitality and rosiness to his *blasé* expression, used up yet kept up; this

appeared to be his condition. He would not be particularly desirable as a friend; and as an enemy should be avoided.

The two, as they sat beside a centre-table, smoking, and sipping a fine brand of Maderia, were a fine study for anatomist or artist.

"Have you spoken to the Estelle?" asked Mead after a pause, making the most wonderful combinations of rings as he emitted his cigar smoke, but betraying great interest in the answer.

"Yes," replied Verrua, who proceeded to give an account of the conversation with the daughter, which, while stating the facts, led the other by sundry interpolations to believe that his suit was favorably regarded.

"She shall be my reward!" exclaimed Mead. "I shall covet her more than all the gold the bank could hold! I shall claim her!"

CHAPTER VII.

RAY.

A FEW words relative to Mr. Ray will not be out of place.

We have quite lost track of him since his almost providential rescue of Senorita Verrua, as detailed in a previous chapter.

He was rather young to occupy such a position

of importance and trust as that of the assistant cashier of the F—— bank—being only twenty-two—but influence had placed him therein.

His lamented father had been one of the founders and up to his death one of the directors of the bank ; in which he secured his son a clerkship at the early age of sixteen, and several years before his death.

The then and present president, Mr. Phillips, had been a life-long friend of the father ; and on his death he transferred his friendship to the son, who was certainly worthy and deserving.

There was, however, another reason for this, other than the kindly recollection of the deceased, and an appreciation of the many noble qualities of the young man himself.

Young Ray had from boyhood been a welcome visitor to Mr. Phillips' house ; and an attachment had sprung up between him and one of the daughters, Miss Lillian ; which in the course of time had resulted in a betrothal.

Though he had done nothing but an act of courtesy and decency in protecting the unknown lady, Ray had much rather the adventure had not occurred, for several reasons, but principally because he could not forget her beautiful face, which haunted him like the vision of a dream.

Happening in such a public place it could not fail to give him a notoriety he did not covet.

He resolved to say nothing about the adven-

ture to his mother or his intended, as a matter not worthy remembering; unless, indeed, he should "hear" from the young gentleman to whom he handed his card.

It chanced, however, that several of his friends witnessed the adventure, and they, of course, lost no time in reporting it in their circle.

The result was that Ray was quizzed and joked on all sides about the beautiful unknown.

It reached the ears, of course, of his mother and *fiancée*; and coming to them second-handed was made much of.

His mother, with whom he occupied a suite of rooms in Twenty-third Street, in the aristocratic neighborhood of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, while regretting the occurrence was pleased with his manly conduct.

Miss Phillips' curiosity, however, was much excited by the representations of a sycophantic friend, Mr. Stone, whom, rumor said, had been "cut out" by Ray.

She so frequently adverted to the adventure and persisted in her questioning that it was easy to see she was jealous of the unknown.

Ray, for the reasons I have stated, was averse to talking on the subject; and having once given an account of the affair, it provoked him to be called upon again to recite the facts and defend himself against any imputations of admiration of the other lady.

But for the unmanly insinuations of Mr. Stone, who still continued to visit the house, Miss Phillips would probably have let the matter rest, satisfied with Ray's assurances of fealty.

She, however, just to provoke him, it seemed to Ray, continued to cross-question him and to tease him.

Once she made him give as far as he was able a detailed description of the unknown lady, and he became quite eloquent in describing her beauty.

"I really do believe, as I have heard, that you are in love with her!" exclaimed Miss Phillips in a pique.

"O don't say that, Lillian!" he exclaimed, and was about saying more when he hesitated and changed color and became confused. He soon, however, regained control of himself, and added, "You know better than that!"

And it never occurred to him that it was not she but himself that he was deceiving.

CHAPTER VIII:

BAFFLED AGAIN.

MEAD met his men by appointment in the neighborhood of the F—— bank, that night, at

an hour when all the traffic of the vicinity, and even the omnibuses, had stopped.

The night was dark and gloomy ; a storm was brewing.

Hans was selected to make a descent from the skylight and examine the vault.

He was an industrious worker, but not particularly brave, and not disposed to run risks.

He suggested that it would be a good idea to close the inside blinds of the windows when he gained the floor of the bank.

"No, no !" said Mead, "that would be unusual and would at once excite suspicion. I'll take care that you are not disturbed. I've fixed everything all right."

It was the rule of the company, or rather of the two leaders, Verrua and Mead, to never let any subordinate know any more of the plan of operation than immediately concerned himself.

Mead rarely officiated in person, and whenever he did, as in this bank affair, he was disguised by a flowing and curly wig and large, bushy beard, and there was not the trace about him of the gentleman of leisure and pleasure, and none but a skilful detective, keen on his track, could have detected him.

Mead had previously "piped" the night watchman in the bank, that is he had arranged that one of the gang had made his acquaintance in the guise of a sailor and given him a paper of

delightful smoking tobacco, which had the effect of putting him to sleep as he sat in his chair through the silent hours of the night without his ever being aware of the fact.

The watchman was a senile man, and all that was expected of him was that he should sit or stroll in the bank, after it was closed for the night,—more for the sake of appearances than any protection to the formidable vault which was thought to be simply invulnerable. Besides had not Herring, when he constructed the mammoth safe, declared there was not a burglar in the world who could crack it? Then, to guard or assist him were the patrolmen outside in the street.

The mission of Hans was to pry open the door at the head of the inside steps of his cellar, go upstairs to the roof and thence to the skylight of the bank.

He experienced some difficulty in opening the door at the head of the cellar stairs; but this once done he had no trouble in gaining the roof through the trap door, as the building was occupied by one firm, and all he had to do was to make his way upstairs, from one floor to the other.

Peering down the skylight Hans perceived the watchman dozing in his chair out of sight of any passer-by. He well knew that the sleep was produced by drugs and he would not awaken easily.

In order to open the skylight of the bank he had to break a pane of glass. He threw the frame wide open, and without pausing to look down the dizzy height or depth he swung himself down upon the gallery, and quickly descended the stairs to the main floor.

The watchman slept as peacefully as a babe.

There were two jets of gas burning; these dimly lighted the place.

To unlock with his skeleton keys the gates at the desk was the work of a moment; so too with the gates at the head of the stairs, leading to the vault.

In a few minutes he was descending the spiral steps. A jet of gas, protected by a wire net, perpetually burned here, and shed a sickly glare over the tomb-like place.

Another circle of the steps and he reached the lower landing or floor, but where was the door to the vault? There was no door that he could see. It was a secret door, and it was next to useless searching for it, although he did make a hasty and futile examination of the circular wall.

He retraced his steps in no good humor, but careful to lock the doors behind him, as he had found them, so that his abortive visit would not be discovered the next morning by the bank authorities and guarded against in the future.

If he had succeeded in getting into the vault, Hans, who was attired in the worn and greasy

overalls of a locksmith, would have shot the watchman ; the alarm of the pistol would enable his confederates outside to get the patrolmen to break into the bank through the window to lend him assistance ; then in the excitement the door was to be opened from the inside, when the others could enter and acting in unison the burglars would overwhelm and chloroform the officers and make way with the booty before any cry could be raised to start pursuit. Improbable you say ? Not at all in a deserted neighborhood, when a jewelry store window on a crowded thoroughfare can be robbed in broad daylight.

Hans was in the act of ascending the steps to make his escape when a face appeared at the window, and then another, and a third and a fourth ; the two last he recognized as confederates, and he felt safe, as the three could overpower the two any time.

He crouched lower to the wall and while the excited patrolmen, with faces flattened against the window were straining their eyes in every direction but the right one, he ran around to where the semi-circle of desks commenced, and hid in the recess formed by the end one and the wall, completely sheltered from view of the windows.

The patrolmen, at the suggestion of the *soi-disant* sailors (who had been unable to detain them longer in the open-all-night saloon over the

way) broke the pane of glass, raised the latch, opened the window, and all four climbed into the bank.

They had to shake the watchman to awaken him.

The last the patrolmen had seen of Hans he was at the foot of the steps leading upstairs, and they naturally concluded he had made his escape that way, especially when they looked up and discovered the skylight open.

The two *soi-disant* sailors of course, knew what the Swede had done under the circumstances; and were in a mood to enjoy the efforts of the little patrolman to induce the other to go upstairs in search of the burglar.

At length the other consented to make the ascent if the little one would give him his revolver. The little fellow demurred at this, but the other protested that one revolver was not enough, in event of an encounter, and his comrade yielded his five shooter to him, and he ascended.

As soon as he disappeared in the dome one of the sailors sprang on the little fellow and hurled him into a corner with sufficient violence to render him insensible.

Hans then emerged from his hiding-place, and it was but the work of a moment for the three to escape through the window. They were beyond pursuit when the alarm was given on the return

of the patrolman from his search in the dome.

CHAPTER IX.

A NEW SCHEME.

THE morning papers of course contained reports of the attempt to rob the F—— bank. The watchman was naturally suspected, and arrested, and not released till after a trial, in which no new facts were elicited. He was discharged for being found asleep at his post. The judge intimated that it was his opinion that the patrolmen were intoxicated, and that no attack had been made on the bank at all except in their imagination; the glass had been accidentally broken.

In a few days the excitement created by the reports abated; and in a week the affair was forgotten, except, of course by those immediately interested.

Mead and Verrua agreed that \$500,000 in gold ought not to be allowed to remain in the bank; and nothing daunted by their two previous failures, at once set about devising another scheme for its possession; impending necessities by this time excited even Verrua's cupidity.

They were rendered almost desperate when

they learned from the same leaky director that \$500,000 more in gold had been deposited in the bank, in the accumulation of a "locking up" of specie for the deal that certain Wall Street leaders contemplated.

As Mead said, asleep or awake, the figures \$1,000,000 stood before him always in numerals of gold.

Daily the two met for consultation, but they could not agree on a plan.

One morning, however, after a protracted interview, Mead exclaimed :

"I have an idea; a glorious idea." In his enthusiasm he added, "A great idea."

"Tell it, tell it!" Senor Verrua asked gleefully.

"I am sure, though, you will not approve of it," said Mead carelessly.

"Tell it, tell it!" reiterated the senor.

"It will require the services of your daughter," cautiously began Mead, closely watching the face of the other, who with difficulty controlled his passion.

"Or, at least," quickly continued Mead, "the service of a young girl."

"Go on," said the senor huskily, his face still clouded.

"You don't suppose I propose anything that would involve or implicate her, do you?" asked Mead.

"Proceed: proceed, please," said Senor Verrua, relaxing and quite pleasant again.

"My plan is very simple and involves no risk whatever," said Mead. "It is this. Make a present of \$10,000 to your daughter; take her to the bank to deposit the same. You are known at the bank. On the way excite her curiosity regarding the vault in which the money and papers are deposited, and womanlike she will want to see this vault. The privilege is granted to few, but it is not likely it will be denied a pretty face. You will be admitted, too, along with her. If not, if you choose to manifest an indifference, why you can afterward very easily worm the particulars out of her. All we want to know is the location of the secret door, whether it is in front or on the side of the steps. This ascertained we can find the spring easy enough. See?" inquired Mead, a smile of satisfaction radiating his face.

"Yes," assented Senor Verrua, musingly.

"There is no danger you see to her; and you can easily excite her curiosity, which is all that is necessary," resumed Mead, and pausing for a reply.

"Yes; it is a good idea, and I will adopt it," said the senor, and he went to an escritoire in the corner and filled out a check.

Mead left a few moments after, muttering to himself, "If she should become any way involved

in the affair, she will be in my power, and then my acceptance will be assured."

In response to a bell a maid appeared and Senor Verrua inquired if his daughter were in, and being told she was, sent word to her that he would shortly be up to see her.

Senorita Estelle had two apartments on the ground floor, independent of her chamber and boudoir, which she called her own; and in one of which she had her piano and easel, the other being a library.

In the library, reclining on the sofa, reading a novel, pausing every now and then to stroke the glossy hide of a greyhound which sat by her side, was the Senorita Estelle,—a beautiful vision!

Her father always apprised her of his intended visits; and so she was not surprised when the maid delivered his message, but announced herself ready to receive him.

When she heard his steps on the stairs she tossed aside the book with characteristic impulsiveness, and rose to meet him.

She met him at the door, and throwing both arms around him with a wild ardor imprinted hearty kisses on his forehead and then on his mouth.

He led her to a seat, or rather she led him, and then drawing a chair he sat beside her.

He presented her with the check for \$10,000 on

a broker's firm, where he kept a speculative account. He wanted to take her to the bank and have her deposit it herself, so that in case of his death, she might be able to attend to this part of her business herself.

She was glad to go to dispel the melancholy feelings his remarks about his death had inspired; and also because she went to so few places, she was always glad to go anywhere.

The carriage was ordered and they were soon on their way down town to the bank.

He easily excited her curiosity regarding the vault and she delighted him by declaring she would ask to be taken into it.

They soon reached the bank.

If Mr. Ray had been at his post I think the sight of him would have so confused Estelle that she would have forgotten all about her intentions of asking to see the vault; but he was out lunching.

After the usual formula of deposit, Estelle naïvely asked her father:—

"Now do you think this is as safe here as in the private drawer of my workbox? Only my box could not hold so much money."

"I think so," replied the father smiling.

"Do you think so?" she pertly asked the bank official.

"I am quite sure of it," he replied.

"Well, I suppose I must be satisfied," she

said carelessly ; then brightening and turning her eyes full upon him, she said in her most charming manner :—" O I wish I could see where you keep the money ! "

Just then Mr. Ray returned from his lunch ; passed behind the railing, and took his seat at his desk.

Any one watching them would have noticed that Ray and Estelle colored up when their eyes met, but beyond this there was no further recognition.

The official who had been talking to Estelle, his senior in years but subordinate in the bank, went up to him, and said :

" Mr. Ray, here is a young lady who has just made a deposit, and is very anxious to see the vault that she may be confident her money will be safe. Will you kindly escort her ? "

Mr. Ray left his desk and approached her.

" It is unusual," said he, deferentially, " to show the vault. Indeed, since the attempt at robbery a few weeks since none except those in authority have been admitted below, but I can see no objection to your taking a peep, if you are so anxious to do so ! "

" Come, daughter, this is unreasonable," observed Senor Verrua, " let us go," yet he made no move to leave.

" O, I do not wish to trouble you, sir ! " said

Estelle, glancing furtively at Mr. Ray, who was evidently very much embarrassed.

"No trouble at all," responded Mr. Ray, and he threw open the gate for her to pass behind the desks in order to descend into the vault.

She passed in, and then glanced at her father.

"Won't you come?" she observed, glancing first at her father and then requestingly at Mr. Ray.

"No—yes," replied the senor, quietly following his daughter into the enclosure, and assisting her down the steps while Mr. Ray went ahead and opened the door.

There was nothing particularly interesting to Estelle in the vault.

In the presence of her father the interview was as embarrassing to her as to the young cashier, who felt drawn to her by a power which he could neither elucidate nor control.

The vault was square, with a continuous solid safe on each side, or, to speak more correctly, it was a large safe with a hollow centre. The ceiling and floor was constructed of large, cast-iron plates.

Ray courteously swung open one of the safes or compartments that happened to be vacant, and so enabled Verrua to judge of the depth to the rear wall.

Habit in such work enabled the senor to make

visual measurements of space that were almost exact to the half inch.

A glance—furtive and listless—revealed to him the mechanism of the secret door leading to the vault; a look enabled him to mentally photograph the plates of the floor, and with an air of being bored, he suggested to his daughter that she assuredly had seen enough to satisfy her that the strong box of the bank was quite impregnable.

She experienced so much embarrassment in Ray's presence that she evinced little interest in the vault, and gladly assented by a nod to her father's suggestion to leave.

CHAPTER X.

ESTELLE'S WARNING.

IN the evening while chatting with her father in the dining-room over the nuts and wine, Mead's pull at the front door bell was recognized, and Estelle, not wishing to meet him, instantly withdrew, pausing at the door leading into the hall until he should have been ushered into the parlor, whence he would pass into the rear room she would have just left.

Fearful lest she might attract their attention by her steps on the matting, she concluded to remain a few moments till they became engaged in

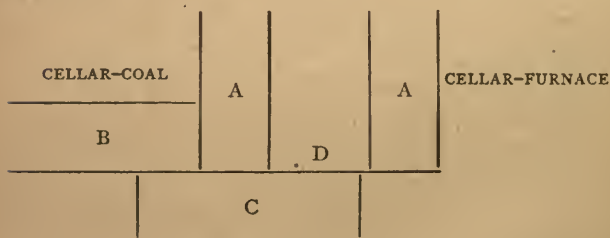
conversation and then she could slip upstairs unperceived.

Thus it was she came to overhear a conversation between her father and Mead, which, for the moment, almost paralyzed her as she stood there ; for it must be remembered she was entirely ignorant of her father's associations, and believed, as she had been taught, that he lived on his income from his estates in Spain, and was the soul of honor.

Verrua began by saying:

"I doubt the feasibility of another attack from above. The tunnel must be carried under the vault to the centre and then an opening made in the floor."

As he spoke he drew the following on a piece of paper:



"Now A A represents the safe forming the sides of the vault. B is the present tunnel, which strikes the outer wall. Now this tunnel must be carried down the side and underneath

to the centre where an opening can be made at D."

Mead, who watched him closely, exclaimed gleefully:

"Yes—yes—the tunnel will not be wasted after all!"

"No time is to be wasted," observed Verrua, handing the paper to Mead.

Estelle thought at one time that all the blood had left her veins and she was becoming petrified; she did not dare to try to move, lest she should fall.

Then she was flushed with a hot glow like a fever that almost consumed her; her head swam, and she had to lean against the door for support.

Anon she felt as if she were chained to the spot. Fortunately she was able to control her emotions and listen attentively to every word that was uttered, in order that she might not be mistaken.

When the conversation changed, and it was none too soon, for the great mental tension was beginning to tell upon her, she glided upstairs into her library.

She sank to the floor from utter exhaustion, after closing the door.

She gave vent to a flood of tears.

"Merciful heaven," she sobbed, "that I might have been spared the revelations of this night! O father, how cruelly you have deceived me!

Better I had died than to have lived to know this! God help me, or, father, I shall hate you. O mother, where are you that I have been so cruelly deceived."

She continued in this impassioned strain for some time; then she calmed, and begun pacing the room.

It was some time before she could regain control of herself which she was evidently trying to do.

"I will save him," she suddenly broke out, "if it brings to me ruin and disgrace. I will warn him; he shall be prepared for them."

Unsophisticated girl as she was, she felt equal to any emergency, for she inherited her father's spirit and self-reliance; and these shone out strongly.

She went into her bed-chamber adjoining, and woke her maid, who had fallen asleep in a chair while awaiting her orders.

"Delia! Delia! wake up! O you log, you!" and she forced the girl awake by a terrible (to the girl) shaking.

"Yes: I am awake. What is it?" yawned the girl, rubbing her eyes.

"Is your brother at home?" asked Estelle breathlessly.

"Yes, he is," was the reply.

"You asked to be allowed to sleep at home to-night. Now if you will get him to take a

letter in the morning to a gentleman for me you may go," said Estelle.

"Why, of course, he will be glad to serve you, Miss 'Stelle," responded the girl, now fully awake.

"Very well; prepare to go while I write," said Estelle, seizing a scrap of paper and writing in pencil.

But composition under the circumstances—writing to Mr. Ray to warn him of the contemplated attack on the bank, without implicating any one by mentioning names—was not as easy as she supposed; words and ideas flowed fast enough, but they were not the right ones.

She tore up several letters before she wrote one that suited her.

"Now mind no one besides yourself and brother must know of this," she said as she handed the letter to the girl and dismissed her.

Then she threw herself on her knees and clasped her hands, and exclaimed feverently:—

"Thank God! I have done it. After what I have heard to-night I can never think of becoming his wife. But he protected me in an hour of danger, and I will help him now, though it brings ruin and disgrace on me and mine!"

The night had passed and it was dawn ere she closed her eyes in sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

FOREWARNED.

MR. RAY had been at his desk a few minutes the next morning when a youth entered, asked for him, and handed him a letter, and left with as little ceremony.

"Some bill or notification," he thought, glancing at it.

The handwriting was not familiar to him and he threw the letter on a pile to be opened in order.

At length its turn came, and he opened it mechanically; but if his associates had been watching him they would have perceived he was much moved by its perusal.

On a pink-tinted obverse sheet of ladies' note paper were the following words written evidently with much agitation:—

"MR. RAY.

"*Sir*:—An attempt will be made—how soon I do not know—to rob your bank, the vault, I mean. Be warned.

"A FRIEND."

"Great heavens! What does this mean?" he mentally ejaculated; but controlling himself, and collecting his thoughts, he determined to reflect on the subject before he laid the mys-

terious communication before the President for his advice.

Since his adventure on Fourteenth Street he had been in receipt of several sportive epistles from fun-loving friends, in which "A Lady in Distress" appealed to him to protect her from a savage dog or a drunken policeman.

Reflection convinced him that this letter was one of these practical jokes, and he tore the missive into bits.

The vault was considered by all bank detectives to be invulnerable, and since the recent scare, a double force of watchmen had been on duty nightly; and there was really no occasion for alarm.

Reflection, however, is a perturbed spirit, and he changed his mind, concluding that the warning was worth heeding.

He was kept very busy that day and it was not till closing hour that he came to this conclusion.

By this time there was no one left in the bank besides himself but the subordinate clerks and these he allowed to leave as the time came.

He had determined to remain that night in the bank, and if need be personally protect the vault.

He now bitterly regretted having shown Senator Verrua and her father into the vault the previous day; for if anything happened he should be censured.

Not that he for a moment supposed that they could be implicated in any way in an attack on the bank; but he should have observed the rules and then there would be nothing to regret.

It was necessary to acquaint one of the watchmen who had charge of the keys of his determination to return and remain in the bank all night; and while this man swept and cleaned the bank after business hours he went out and dined and provided himself with some crackers and cheese and a couple of bottles of beer, for midnight consumption. He also procured reading matter in the shape of a yellow covered romance warranted to keep any one awake all night.

The revolver in his desk he had loaded several days before; this was O. K.

He fixed the lights and everything as usual, and seated himself behind the desks in a position in which he could not be seen from the streets.

Hour after hour passed, morning dawned and opening time arrived, without anything unusual occurring, and Ray made up his mind he had been tricked, and was glad he had not shown the letter to his associates.

While he kept his vigil by keeping himself awake by one of Sylvanus Cobb's sensational romances, Mead with his men had worked in the tunnel, which before daylight had been carried down the side of the vault and underneath to the point indicated on the diagram by

Verrua; and Hans made arrangements to pass the day in the tunnel underneath to listen to the footsteps above that he might nicely calculate the thickness of the plates of the floor.

The men were still at work in the morning when Ray stopped in Hans' place to purchase a *boutonnière*.

CHAPTER XII.

THEY MEET AGAIN.

ESTELLE, accompanied by her maid, went shopping the next morning in Broadway, when she met Mr. Ray, up-town on business of the bank.

A friendly smile encouraged him to stop and speak, and he told of his night's adventure.

If he had regarded her with other than admiring eyes he could not have failed to have perceived that she was much embarrassed by the information; this he attributed naturally enough to their unexpected meeting.

"Are you going to watch again to night," she inquired.

"No; I think not. I am beginning to think I am the dupe of a joke," he replied.

"O I should watch for a few nights at all events," she said. "Then if nothing occurs it would be foolish to persevere."

She spoke so earnestly that she impressed him.

"I will take your advice," he replied, and after a few unimportant remarks they separated.

She shortly after returned home and learned from the servant that Mead had not called.

She had determined to watch his coming, and if possible overhear the conversation between him and her father.

She passed a restless day ; for Mead did not call till after tea.

She watched from over the banisters, and the moment Mead was seated she was at the curtain listening.

"You received my dispatch?" she heard her father say.

"Yes, and I have arranged everything ; and before daylight the matter will be settled," replied Mead, in a manner that chilled the blood in her veins.

"If Ray is there again—?" observed her father.

"He will never be there again," responded Mead significantly, "that's all !"

She was seized with such a violent tremor that she must have shook the curtains ; but they were too much engrossed to notice it.

She tottered to a chair and thence upstairs to her own room.

"Merciful heavens!" she exclaimed. "I have probably led him to his death by urging

him to watch again to-night! He must be saved, and I will save him!"

She heard a movement in the lower room and went to the door to listen.

Mead and her father came out together.

"Good-night, daughter," he called up.

"Good-night," she responded huskily.

In a moment she had put on her bonnet, descended to the street, and was on her way to the bank.

CHAPTER XIII.

BYRNES.

RAY on returning to the bank had an interview with the president, the result of which was that he was instructed to go to Police Headquarters on Mulberry Street, and confer with the chief of the Detective Bureau.

Chief James Irving, with the glance, bearing, mustache and imperial of a soldier, listened patiently to his statement, interrupting him with such ejaculations as, "Yes, that's what they would do!" "That's the way they would work that!" When Ray had finished Irving observed:—

"I'll send you a man in the course of the day—before the bank closes."

It happened that the regular Wall Street force,

Radford, Elder, Duzenberry, were on active detail, and looking over his blotter or assignments Irving found that the best available man was young Tom Byrnes, who though he had not yet distinguished himself by any *coup*, was recognized as a safe, slow and sure man.

Byrnes had not been long in the detective department of the big marble building on Mulberry Street ; though he had been on the force in the Fifteenth Precinct for several years, since returning from the war, after a full period of service in Ellsworth's Fire Zouaves, under the brave and unfortunate organizer, then Farnham, and latterly Col. Charles Mck. Loeser, who testifies to his manly, unobtrusive bravery as a soldier.

When a few hours later, Byrnes presented himself at the bank, Ray was surprised to find such a boyish looking man entrusted with such important work ; a man whose clear and healthy face, slight black mustache, and trim, active figure were those of youth, while his imperturbable manner and meditative features indicated character and experience, though his appearance as he walked slowly up to the desk with his hands in the pockets of his jacket and a smouldering cigar between his lips, did not impress any such idea, or that he by his achievements would eventually become the Vidocq of New York, the terror of evildoers.

Ray, at Byrnes's request, gave him all the particulars, but to Ray's disgust the detective did not evince the slightest surprise or interest,—never once taking his hands out of his pockets, or the cigar from his mouth.

“I'll present myself at the bank to-night to go on duty as a watchman,” said Byrnes as he finished; “arrange that for me,—meet me here—leave the rest to me,” and he turned and sauntered away as if there was nothing more important on his mind than an effort to kill time without too much exertion.

Byrnes in these early days of his experience on the force was formulating his philosophy and while apparently walking aimlessly and listlessly about was studying characters and places.

It is his favorite theory that he has been successful by going about his work in the exactly different way the orthodox detective pursues. He believes in the ounce of prevention. For instance, before the Centennial celebration in New York he caused the arrest and detention until after the fête, of all the suspicious “crooks” found in the city instead of waiting for them to be detected in the act.

One day I was riding in a Broadway car with him, and tapping me on the knee he whispered,

“Don't look at me. Do you notice anything strange or different in that man opposite?”

While he looked out of the window, evidently

to see that he was not carried past the street he was to alight at, I glanced at a midde aged, moderately dressed man opposite, who but for a certain peculiar expression of the eye, a lack-lustre, furtive eye, I should have considered an "ordinary, everyday sort of a man."

"No—his eyes look weak and worn," I whispered in reply.

"See how different he *uses* them from the rest."

I glanced opposite again; the man's eyes, intent as a panther's prepared to spring on its victim, wandered from one person to another, or, more properly speaking one stomach to the next, gloating over the display of watch-chains. It was a revelation, the motive of stealing the watch the glance of those eyes betrayed, the mental calculation of the possibility or feasibility of securing one of them. So engrossed was the pickpocket in his thoughts that he did not notice he was observed.

The eyes of all the others on the row, I observed, were animated by the changeful thoughts of conversation or reflection or attracted by passing objects; but those two eyes seemed to be fascinated by the display of watch-chains and a second glance revealed a certain nervous, involuntary movement of the fingers as if "clutching" the coveted booty.

"Be careful he does not notice you," whis-

pered Byrnes, taking out of his pocket a morning paper and carelessly glancing over the same.

A gentleman sitting next to the party opposite under surveillance, resumes reading his paper, and the pickpocket next him also takes out a paper and apparently reads it, but I, observing him, find that he has it *upside down*, and that he holds it merely as a cover while with his other hand he endeavors to lift his neighbor's watch from his pocket—the sight of those two fingers pushed out from underneath the paper in an effort to catch the watch, still remains in my memory as the first work of the kind I had ever seen.

He had almost succeeded in catching the chain when the owner jumped up and rushed out of the car having passed his place in his reading until he happened to glance up from the paper.

I was so excited that had not Byrnes admonished silence by touching me with his elbow I think I should have exclaimed, "That man has been trying to steal your watch, sir!"

Byrnes rose, leaned over and touching the pickpocket on the shoulder, said significantly:—

"I want you!"

Byrnes passed down the car to the door.

The man arose immediately and followed him; so did I of course.

Byrnes handed the man over to a policeman who took him in charge.

"Now," said Byrnes, "did not that fellow's actions at once give him away?"

"Yes."

"Now if he had been an innocent man, would he have arose so meekly and followed me, but wouldn't he have asked, 'What do you want sir?'"

I afterwards found the man was a well-known western criminal, on his first visit to the city, and that a search of the records showed he was wanted by the chief of police in Cincinnati, O., to whom Byrnes remanded him.

To resume my story. After a stroll in the neighborhood of the bank, which resulted in his coming to the conclusion that the only questionable or suspicious place or "plant" in the neighborhood was Hans' flower store, Byrnes went in and gave an order for a handsome basket of floral beauties to be sent to a well-known danseuse in a spectacle that succeeded the famous "Black Crook" at Niblo's Garden, giving a card bearing the name of Thomas de Conway, under quite a showy crest.

I need not say that the sending of the basket to the danseuse was a "blind," that is, that Byrnes did not know her or care a jot about honoring her, and that he had used a card which was a fiction prepared for such occasions; but he wanted an excuse to enter the place, and the moment he saw that Hans seemed alarmed at

such an order, and then fell to whistling to conceal his momentary trepidation, he decided there was something wrong about him and his place.

Had Hans acted in a natural manner, like an innocent man, with nothing to fear, he would have escaped Byrnes' suspicions; but even so small an act as whistling is sometimes a clue to such a close student of human nature as Byrnes, because the effort to conceal is visible to him in that it is clearly not natural to the man.

"Shadowing" Hans, Byrnes followed him from his place to an up-town florist, where he gave his order, as Hans did not propose to personally attend to the same.

Byrnes returned to headquarters and had a conference with the chief regarding the movement of the local "crooks," the result of which was that both decided that "new men" were on the work at the bank, as the "locals" were all satisfactorily accounted for.

Byrnes then summoned Ralston, who like himself was a youngster, but already proving himself a "double" or "shadow," that is a good man to work with.

Ralston was detailed to "pipe" the outside of the bank during the night, and at a signal to make a descent into Hans' cellar, calling the "beat," that is the policeman on the post, to his assistance.

These details arranged, Byrnes took a nap in a

chair tilted back against the wall of his office, until he instinctively (from force of habit) awoke at the desired time; and then arraying himself in a coarse woollen suit, such as a night watchman might wear, still further effectually disguising himself by a bushy, reddish beard and shock of hair he presented himself at the bank.

Ray did not recognize him at first, so thorough was this metamorphosis. He decided at once that Byrnes was a much smarter man than his appearance had indicated.

The regular watchman, who at first was disposed to be very chary towards his rival, was instructed to occupy his usual chair, in his usual way—he might indulge in a nap if he felt so disposed. Ray took his seat of the night before while Byrnes sat at the foot of the steps, before the open door of the vault, evidently contented with his thoughts; for he never uttered a word, scarcely breathed, after he took his place.

Suddenly he heard the tap of a chisel on the floor; then he noiselessly moved into the vault, closed the door behind him, and stood, like a tiger awaiting his prey, for the opening in the floor to grab his man.

The plate reached by the excavation it was simple and easy work for the skilled Hans to cut and remove a section,—sufficient for him to crawl into the vault and the others to follow him,

as all the force would be needed on the several locks of the safe.

Mead's plan was that each man would carry all the gold he could, that is, as many bags from the vault to the cellar, from which they could make their escape with the booty in the excitement and confusion of a fire breaking out in the store on the other side of the bank, which he would kindle by reaching the roof by the same way that Hans did when he entered the bank through the skylight.

Mead proposed to superintend the work in the tunnel and vault until the supreme moment of cracking the locks; then he would rush to the roof, cross that of the bank, and opening the scuttle of the store on the other side, descend to the upper floor and ignite the inflammable stuff stored there.

Mead mapped out the plan with a view of self-preservation, as if they should be disturbed in the bank there would be a good chance for him to escape on the roof.

He was crouching in the tunnel, holding the bull's-eye lantern when Hans cut through the plate, removed it and had crawled half way up when he uttered an oath and attempted to free himself from the clutches of some one or something in the vault above. Byrnes!

The moment that Hans ejaculated Mead "doused" the lantern and retreated to the safety

of the cellar, closely followed by the others who soon decided they could not help Hans.

Divining that the outside would be watched, Mead ordered the men to follow him to the roof, where he started the fire as intended, and working their way quickly down-stairs they secreted themselves until the doors were opened by the firemen when they escaped in the crowd, never giving a thought to Hans.

Hans, as soon as he had got his head, shoulders and arms into the vault, and was preparing to raise himself into the same, was seized by brawny hands and before he could divine what had happened he was handcuffed, gagged and held in the clutches of a strong embrace, so that he could not squirm or sink away back into the tunnel.

In the vault there was the total black of darkness; Hans could not see who had him; but Byrnes could for the moment see Hans by the light of the lantern in the tunnel until it was turned off by the fleeing Mead. In the gloom he recognized him as the florist.

Kicking back or open the unfastened vault door with his foot, Byrnes, still holding Hans, called to Ray, and he and the watchman rushed down the stairs to him, the latter having a bull's-eye lantern.

With their assistance Byrnes drew Hans up into the vault,

"Now you watch him," he said to Ray. "Shoot any one that attempts to come up," he said to the watchman, who had drawn his revolver.

Byrnes rushed upstairs, opened a window and blew a whistle which called Ralston from the other side of the street.

"Close in on them in the cellar! "

While Ralston and his men made a raid on the cellar, Byrnes returned to the assistance of Ray—and just then a fire broke out in the adjoining store.

Ralston, breaking into the cellar found it deserted, and followed by his men he crawled into the tunnel and thence into the vault.

Mead in escaping had closed the trap-door in the floor or rather ceiling of the cellar, and thus completely thrown Ralston off the scent, and even now amid the clanging of the fire-bells and the hurly-burly he and his men were leaving the next building.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ATTACK.

IT is often said that we never know what we can do or endure until we try; and if any one had told Estelle that she could clandestinely leave her home in the silent hours of the night

unattended, and go to the unfrequented region of the bank down-town, as she had done, she would have considered the speaker as crazy as she would herself to contemplate, much less, undertake such a wild idea.

She paused within a block of the bank, to decide what course she should pursue.

Perhaps after all Mr. Ray had not followed her advice, and consequently was not at the bank.

Various scenes in which he was the central figure came up in her mind; but not one it is safe to say presented him in the company of his betrothed; for, it must be remembered, she was not aware of his engagement.

Although she had given up all hope of ever becoming his wife she had no idea of a rival.

As she stood watching the bank, undecided what to do next, Ralston passed, eyed her sharply, and seemed inclined to speak, but she returned his look with such dignity that he did not.

Suddenly there was a glow of light on the roof adjoining the bank; then a mass of flames, and while bells tolled, engines dashed around corners, men rushed frantically past her, and in a few minutes the neighborhood was full of life and bustle.

If she had remained longer at the curtain she would have learned that this fire was a part of

the programme in the assault on the bank, and which we have seen had been so faithfully executed.

She was borne by the crowd down the street a block or two, but as soon as she could escape by going into a cross street she returned to the bank, which she reached in time to see Ray emerge from the door with two other men (Byrnes and Hans), while Ralston and his men remained in charge with the watchmen while they took the prisoner to the station house.

She could not resist the inspiration to push through the crowd and speak to Ray.

"Are you hurt?" she gasped.

"No."

"Thank God!"

Byrnes with Hans was slightly in advance, and consequently they did not see her, or his suspicions might have been aroused.

Before Ray could reply she sank back in the group, and instantly men took her place and she gradually made her way out and returned home—home! what a mockery the word seemed to her! And losing her in the crowd, Ray, recalled to himself by Byrnes's admonition to move quick began to doubt his senses that he had really seen her.

CHAPTER XV.

ESTELLE LEAVES HOME.

ESTELLE after leaving the scene of disaster returned home, and was fortunate in reaching there before her father, and also in getting in without alarming any of the household.

In the privacy of her own room she succumbed to her emotions, which she had so bravely resisted. All that she had done seemed like the phantasy of a dream; if she had known what she would have had to do when she went out, it is doubtful if she in her inexperience could have been equal to the emergency. She finally slept from sheer physical exhaustion, and arose the next morning much refreshed and invigorated by her peaceful slumber. She breakfasted as usual in her own room, as her father was rather irregular in his hours; and after the meal set herself to thinking over her position.

She could not think of her father's position without feeling the blister of shame on her cheeks, and decided that communion with him could never again be as in the past, and while she still dearly loved him, she did not doubt but that it would be best that in the future their paths in life should be separate. She resolved to leave home clandestinely, and seek to make her own living out in the world; and thus sever

associations which could not fail to end in disgrace and ruin. Though by temperament impulsive and impetuous she was not hasty in coming to this purpose, but deliberate and cautious. She did not conceal from herself the fact that she was woefully inexperienced in matters of the world, but she had confidence in herself—in her common sense, judgment and courage; and also that confidence in the future which generally animates youth which has not learned the painful lesson that there *is* such a word as *fail* in the lexicon. Anyway, she had rather trust to the ordeal of fate than remain in her present position.

She called Delia, and naïvely asked her:

“Delia, suppose that you were in want of a situation, how should you set about getting one?”

“Why, I’d look over the advertisements in the papers, miss!”

“Bring me the papers.”

The morning papers were brought her, and after reading very sensational accounts of the attempt to rob the bank and the incendiary fire next door, she carefully scanned the advertisements without finding anything that suited her. Aye, but what did she want? To admit the fact, she really did not know herself. She argued that she was thoroughly educated and highly accomplished, and there must be something that she could do; but exactly what she had not decided. Her eye fell upon a caption of “Instruction” in

the *Herald*. A governess for a young lady was wanted. Apply so and so. This would suit her, and she made a memorandum. Under the caption of "Specials" she read an advertisement for a companion to a middle-aged invalid lady. This would suit her better, probably; but she answered both. The next question was where to have the replies sent.

"Delia!"

"Yes, miss."

"Suppose you wanted to have a letter written to you and did not wish to have it sent to the house, what should you do?"

"Have it sent to the general post office."

"True, true! But where is that?"

"Oh, I can go and get it for you."

"Very well."

The letters were written and entrusted to Delia to mail. Delia, here let it be observed, had been told by Mme. Costelli when she was engaged that her sole duty would be to attend Senorita Estelle, whom she must obey implicitly; and, consequently, now she did as that lady ordered, however much in her own mind she questioned the wisdom or propriety of the proceeding. A dislike which Mme. Costelli inspired in all by her haughtiness prevented Delia seeking counsel with her whenever she would have liked to have had the senorita's orders approved.

After Delia had gone with the letters the

thought occurred to Estelle, should she leave her father without making an effort to bring about a reform in his life? Deprived of her love, and left to himself, he might sink lower yet.

The thought inspired her to a great deed.

She descended to the rear parlor where she knew her father was sitting. He looked pale and haggard from the fatigue and excitement and disappointment of the previous night, and he was not, as may be surmised, in a good humor, either.

"Father!"

"Well, daughter?"

And he placed a chair for her near his own. A certain severity of manner prevented any demonstration of affection.

"Well, how is my pet this evening?"

"Father!" but she was unable to proceed. "O God, that I had never lived till this moment!" and she rose and paced the room in great mental agitation.

"Why, daughter, what means this?" he exclaimed, rising and following her.

She turned upon him, but did not speak till she fully recovered control of herself.

"Father, I chanced night before last and also last night to overhear the conversation between you and Mead—"

"You did, eh?" he answered, little imagining what she would reply, but supposing she would allude to the marriage discussion.

“Yes, I did, and—and I know all—the infamous scheme to rob the bank.”

Signor Verrura gazed at her in bewilderment, utterly unable to speak.

“Father, give up these vile associations; leave this city, take me back to Spain—I had rather die there of starvation (if indeed we are poor as we seem to be) than live here in luxury on the gains of dishonesty!”

“You are mad!” faltered the senor.

“No, I am not. But you are if you refuse to listen to me.”

“Why do you allude to these matters—is it to torment me?”

“No; to reclaim you ere it is too late!” she replied firmly.

The words angered him; he replied fiercely:

“Foolish girl! do not speak more or else you will make me forget that you are my daughter!” and he rushed into the hall, seized his hat, and left the house.

“I will try again,” she said.

She sought him again the next morning.

“Father,” she began, “knowing all that I do, I cannot live with any peace of mind while you are engaged in your present dishonest schemes. O father, you do not know what heart pains it causes me to speak this way to you. O listen to me! Sever these vile associations, which can only end in your ruin and disgrace, and take me away

—if not home to Spain, away anywhere from here !” and she knelt imploringly at his feet.

For several moments he was unable to reply, and then he blurted out :

“ Impossible ! You know not what you have asked. O daughter, spare me ! ”

“ Spare you ? I wish to save you. ”

“ Too late, too late ! ” He buried his head in his hands in agony.

“ Why ? ”

“ Because I am so involved in debt and complicated with associations that I cannot ! ”

“ Father, your whole life has been a studied, persistent lie ! ”

“ I know it, but I could not help it. O spare me, daughter ! ”

Before that slender girl the strong man quailed like a culprit—for he was one.

There was a pause ; and he gained courage, while in the conflict between duty and love, she partially relented.

“ You should not have attempted to interfere in my business,” he said. “ It was dishonorable of you to play eavesdropper. Go to your room and never refer to this matter again. ”

He pushed her away and strode across to the buffet, and took some brandy.

She arose, glanced at him as if she would speak once more, but hesitated, and then all that was bright and hopeful in her face disappeared, and

there came a determined, desperate, imperturbable expression.

Later in the day Delia brought her two letters. These were replies to her answers to the advertisements. Both requested her to call on the respective parties.

She went out the next morning for the purpose. She called first on the lady who wished a governess for her daughter. The number was a brown-stone in a fashionable neighborhood. When she gave her card to the servant, that personage glancing at it said contemptuously, "O yes, you are a governess," and ushered her into a sumptuous front parlor.

In a few moments after some one—a previous applicant Estelle correctly surmised—had passed out, the folding doors were opened, revealing a stout, coarse lady seated on a sofa.

"Come here," said this one.

Estelle passed into a rear room, and sat on the chair the lady motioned her to take.

"You are rather young to apply for a position of this kind."

"I am young ; but I believe I possess all the requirements."

"Where were you last engaged?"

"I have no experience as a governess," said Estelle.

"Have you references?"

"No," replied Estelle wonderingly.

"It is no use our talking any longer," and the consequential lady arose and haughtily sailed from the room, evidently very indignant.

Estelle, however, had made up her mind not to be discouraged, and though she felt this rude treatment keenly, she attributed it to the ill-breeding of the lady rather than to any wanton intention to insult her, and so was not worried. She followed the lady into the hall, and there the servant was waiting to open the door for her. She breathed freer when she was out of the house.

She went to the Brevoort House to see the lady who wanted a companion. She was taken to a private parlor, where she found a middle-aged lady, reclining on a sofa which she was evidently unable to leave. She received Estelle with a courtesy and kindness which at once placed her at ease, beginning by telling her that she had been bed-ridden by rheumatism for fifteen years. She asked Estelle to play for her on the piano, and was charmed by her rendering of one of Auber's plaintive symphonies. Estelle's reading also pleased her. She was satisfied with Estelle's assertion that she possessed some skill in drawing and painting.

"I should like to see your references," she said.

"I have none."

"No references! Why how is that?"

"Because I have never been engaged anywhere before!"

"Ah, yes. Do you live at home?"

"Yes."

"Why do you leave home? Father finds it impossible to support so large a family I suppose. Why did you not bring your mother with you?"

"She is dead."

"Your father, too?"

"No."

"Where do you live? I thought it was queer you did not give your address in your card."

"Don't ask me," said Estelle desperately.

"What?"

"You must ask me nothing, but take me as I am, with the assurance that all is right. Troubles at home cause me to take this step, but I will never reveal those troubles. If I was not satisfied that under the circumstances I ought to leave home, I should not."

"I thought you were rather young to have seen much service!"

"Until I saw your advertisement I never dreamed of applying for a place of the kind."

"You are sure you are not acting rashly?"

"Quite."

"You will not want a suitor to come and see you?"

"No; I shall want to see no one and shall expect to see no one."

"Ah, then, you do not leave home for some love affair?"

"No."

"I am interested in you; I wish you would confide in me!"

"I have already told you more than I intended," responded Estelle.

"I wish you would tell me your secret."

"I would as soon think of cutting my hand off."

"It must be very painful then."

"It is. If you cannot engage me without knowing it, or wishing to know more of me than I have told, we had better close this interview."

"Don't be hasty. I like you, and believe I can trust you. But there is another to be suited besides myself."

"Your husband?"

"No—my daughter-in-law. My son and his wife are going to Europe; while they are gone I shall occupy their residence on the Hudson. I am afraid you'll find it very lonely up there; there will be none besides ourselves and the servants."

"I shall like it all the better!"

"Oh, my poor girl, what a sorrow yours must be to desire such seclusion!"

The daughter-in-law, Mrs. Styles, entered. She was a pleasant-faced, amiable lady.

"My daughter-in-law," said the elder Mrs. Styles.

Both bowed formally.

"Miss Verrua has applied to be my companion," she continued.

"I am quite satisfied the place will not suit you," said young Mrs. Styles, looking at Estelle. "It is the dulllest place in the world. You would die before the month is over of ennui."

"Your description charms me," said Estelle. "I seek retirement and solitude."

"Oh! I see; you are a widow!" said young Mrs. Styles, glancing at Estelle's black silk.

Before Estelle could reply, the old lady exclaimed:

"Never mind your secret! Never mind your secret! Mary, you should not have spoken that way to her; you should have whispered it to me!"

"I am sorry if I have hurt your feelings. I did not intend to."

"Thank you."

"Are you satisfied with her," asked the elderly Mrs. Styles of the younger, in an undertone.

"Yes, I am, if you are," replied the other.

"You have been talking to her?"

"Yes; I am entirely satisfied."

"Then you had better engage her at once. John won't object."

"What are your ideas regarding compensation?" began the old lady.

Estelle hesitated before confessing she had no ideas on the subject.

"We gave Mrs. Black twelve hundred a year and 'the home,'" said the younger Mrs. Styles. "Would that suit you?"

"Yes; that would be satisfactory," said Estelle.

"Can you start with us to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Where shall we send for your baggage—you will start from here with us?"

Again Estelle was confused.

"Or you can have it sent to the boat, and meet us there, but you must be sure and be there."

"I will be there," said Estelle.

"I am sure you will!" exclaimed the elder lady.

The younger Mrs. Styles then handed her a card, giving the name of the steamboat and the pier.

"Now, my dear, my advice to you is that you had better send your baggage there, to the care of Mr. Styles,—everybody about the pier knows my husband, and that you come here and go to the boat with us."

"I will do that," said Estelle.

After an interchange of a few common-place remarks, which made them better acquainted, Estelle left, and returned home. Not until she was in the privacy of her own home did she fully realize what she had done; and probably at the

moment if she could unsay all that she had said she would gladly do so ; but she soon satisfied herself she could not have done better, and was pleased that affairs had taken the turn.

She proposed to take a very few things with her, but how to get these out of the house puzzled her for some time.

"Delia," she called.

"Yes, miss," said the girl, coming in from the next room.

"You have a trunk here?"

"Yes, miss."

"Would it hold these things?"

"Yes, miss, and more, too."

"And these?"

"Yes, miss."

"It is large."

"It is about the size of yours there ; the same cover would fit both."

Estelle reflected for a moment.

"Has your cover your name on it?" she asked.

"No."

"Bring it here."

"Very well," and Delia passed upstairs to her own room.

While she was gone Estelle removed as much of the covering from her trunk as she could without assistance ; then when Delia returned she got it off entirely, and put the one that the girl had

brought in its place. It is needless to say this completely disguised the trunk, so that if any one saw it leaving the house they would not know it was hers.

"Delia, you have never deceived me. Can I rely on you now?"

"Why, Miss 'Stelle, what a question!"

"I want you to go and order an expressman to call for this early in the morning—while *she* is at mass. You'll be watching and let him in, so that there is every probability that no questions will be asked."

"But, miss—oh, I see, you are going to run away to be married!" exclaimed the girl, evidently pleased with the idea.

"You'll attend to this for me to-night, and not a word about it to a soul?"

"Yes, miss. I know who he is; the young gentleman at the bank, to whom my brother took the letter!"

"Never mind about that!"

The intervening hours were the most tedious that Estelle ever passed. The hours till evening dragged; Delia's errand to the express office and return constituted an era, and it seemed an age before dawn when the man called; for Estelle could not sleep, try as she would.

She heard Mme. Costelli leave for mass; she did not anticipate interference from her father, who slept soundly in his room. Presently the

wagon drove up. Delia opened the door, the man entered and came up and got the trunk and left with it, Estelle giving him directions where to take it. This off her mind she managed to fall asleep, and she slept till nearly midday. Delia in order not to excite suspicion had brought her breakfast up at the usual hour, and it was awaiting her on the table.

After breakfasting she wrote a few lines for her father, whom she had heard shortly before leave the house. She simply told him that she would not remain under the same roof with him as long as he continued his present life; that she had procured honorable employment for herself, and would make known her whereabouts when the proper time arrived. This note she placed on her father's dressing case.

It may appear singular that she never now has a thought of Ray. She was trying to forget him; she had resolved to do so.

She left the house early in the afternoon and joined her new found friends at the Brevoort House. She was now presented to Mr. Styles, a courteous and affable gentleman.

After a few hours pleasant conversation they all left for the boat, where her trunk had arrived all right; and in an hour more she was steaming up the Hudson, on her way to her new home on the banks of that noble river.

CHAPTER XVI.

HER NEW LIFE.

THE home of the Styles' was delightfully situated on the Hudson, a few miles below Tarrytown. The house had been built by the elder Mrs. Styles' father, and consequently had been in the family for many years. Each successive occupant had done something towards improving the house and grounds; and now it was one of the most charming estates in the vicinity. The house, a massive stone edifice, none the less comfortable for being old fashioned, stood on a bluff, affording a clear and expansive view of the river; the overflow of which, at certain seasons, formed a little bayou, at the foot of the declivity. From the main road the mansion was approached through a copse of noble trees.

Estelle was delighted with the place and its surroundings; she had read of such charming localities in novels, and for the first few days of her sojourn could hardly trust her senses, that she really was so pleasantly situated.

She was of course much worried by sad thoughts, regarding her father; at times the still, small voice of conscience would whisper she had done a great wrong in leaving him when she should have remained and tried to rescue him;

and then she would become despondent and miserable, and often in the night, while kept awake by these bitter reflections, she would resolve that she would leave in the morning and return to him. In this mood she severely condemned herself, as a heartless, cruel girl and regarded her rascally father as an injured man.

But have you never noticed that the thoughts and plans of the dark hours after we have retired to the rest a busy mind or uncomfortable conscience prevents us taking, seldom amount to anything? Reflect a moment and see if this is not your experience. Mind, I am not including the thoughts and plans of dreams; for they often come true. Somehow the phantasies of the night are always dissipated by the glorious light of morning; the first ray of sunlight that shoots through the window sends them adrift.

So with Estelle, when she arose in the morning; she was satisfied she had done right in saving herself from misery and disgrace by severing the disgraceful affiliation; for she knew that nothing short of a miracle could turn her father whenever he had made up his mind. When he lent a deaf ear to her second entreaty, what could she hope for? True, there was the biblical injunction of duty to parents; but it is not always easy to define our duties. There was hope that remorse caused by her desertion for the reason he so well knew might

lead to his reformation, and now again, she was satisfied what she had done was for the best, and was once more happy.

She had been engaged as a companion to the elder Mrs. Styles; but through the kindness of that estimable lady, who deeply sympathized with her in her sorrow, albeit she did not know what that sorrow was, she was free to follow her own inclinations, and for the first few weeks of her sojourn at "the Retreat," she passed most of her time out of doors. It was the beautiful spring time, and her enjoyment was that of a child.

Happy days pass quickly like bright scenes.

In a little over a month Mr. and Mrs. Styles departed on their trip to Europe; and then Estelle was kept a good deal in the house, in the company of the old lady; but this was not at all wearisome; for as we know she loved to read and to play and to draw, and this was all that she was asked to do. In this way day after day was passed—pleasantly shall I not add?

CHAPTER XVII.

SUICIDE.

I HAVE become so much interested in the career of that noble girl, Estelle, as indeed I hope

you have, dear reader, that I am loth to leave her.

The course of my narrative, however, calls me away from her—to her father.

Senor Verrua would hardly believe his eyes when he read Estelle's note informing him of her intention to leave and seek her fortune out in the world. He went up to her room and looked for her, and tried to persuade himself that she was hiding from him, in order to try him; and would reveal herself in a few days.

Mme. Costelli, of course, could give no information, and Delia was prudently evasive when questioned on the subject. Secretly she condemned herself for her course in the affair, but the strong personal motive of shielding herself from blame prevailed and prevented a disclosure. She could not, however, have given any clue to her whereabouts. For several days the matter was kept from Mead; when he was enlightened he expressed the opinion she was hiding somewhere in the city and would return when her money was gone.

This gave some hope and encouragement to the bereaved father. His mental sufferings in his anxiety concerning the welfare of his daughter were intense and wore upon him; for he was by no means a strong man physically. Now for the first time he experienced the pangs of remorse and bitterly regretted his life of crime and

degradation. Was the light from above breaking in upon him? Did he think of his daughter's parting words?

Days passed and still nothing was heard of Estelle; and the senor, who was not of so sanguine a temperament as Mead, settled in the conviction that he should never see his darling again. O what would he not give to be able to even recall his last words with her! It maddened him to think that she should have left him with such cruel words ringing in her ears! He felt that he had lost her esteem and that she must scorn him! That, indeed, this was the reason she had forsaken him.

The poor man was really to be pitied. He soon became an object of commiseration; for constantly harassed by his sad thoughts he was able to obtain little sleep, and lost his appetite, so that he faded away and shrank up to a miserable looking, pale man, so nervous that the sudden opening of a door would startle him. He would remain for days in the house constantly brooding over his sorrow. The only solace he found was that afforded by the cigar, and he smoked incessantly, in fact too much for his disordered nervous system.

"If you don't go out and get a little fresh air, and stop that smoking you will never get through this!" Mead said to him frequently.

"The bright light of day and clear air distresses

me," said the miserable man. "I should die in an hour's time if it was not for my cigar! I want to die; there is nothing to live for now!"

In vain Mead and Mme. Costelli tried to cheer him up. He would not permit them to call in medical advice. To both of them it was evident he could not last long unless there was soon a change, and they both exerted themselves repeatedly in vain to bring about one.

Mead resorted to the deception of telling him that he had obtained a clue to his daughter's whereabouts and this buoyed him up for a time; but when days passed without her returning his remorse assumed the form of desperation, and at length he became so violent that he was kept confined in his room, and watched closely.

Mead having the opportunity to examine Verrua's papers, found that he had always lived up to his gains, and that he was on the verge of bankruptcy. Both of them had relied on the bank scheme to an extent that its failure had equally embarrassed them. Indeed if the senor had not given that \$10,000 to his daughter he would not have a cent left, and that was, unfortunately, beyond reach in Estelle's absence.

One evening, as Mead was partaking of some refreshment in the dining-room, Mme. Costelli ran down and requested him to come upstairs and hear the senor, as he was talking very strangely.

"It is as I had expected—he has lost his mind," said Mead sorrowfully, accompanying Costelli upstairs.

Lying on the sofa was the senor, his collar torn open and his throat bare, his eyes glaring around wildly, while he muttered something about the glories of his family, the inheritance that awaited Estelle and much that was incomprehensible.

"He is talking about his early life," said Costelli; and then perceiving their presence rather annoyed the sufferer they withdrew to the next room, and she went on to tell Mead for the first time all about Verrua's antecedents in Spain, especially dwelling on the inheritance that would fall to Estelle from her grandfather.

"Do you know she is engaged to me?" asked Mead.

"No!"

"Singular! But she would not be likely to speak on the subject. Does she know of the probable inheritance?"

"Slightly."

"Humph! You know more?"

"Yes; I know all."

A movement in the next room attracted their attention and they looked in.

Senor Verrua held a letter in his hand and was evidently trying to read the same when he

perceived them. He instantly crumpled it and put it in his pocket, exclaiming :

“Go away! Go away! I don’t want you near me! Stop your whispering! You are plotting for my death! You are not my true friends. If my darling Estelle does not come back you’ll murder and rob me!”

Although they withdrew he continued in this strain for some minutes, growing very violent. Lest they should alarm him again they refrained from looking in shortly after when they heard him get up and totter across the room, believing he was returning to his bed.

“Oh!” he exclaimed, and then fell, and they rushed in—and oh! what a horrible sight met their gaze.

He had seized a knife from a plate on the mantel-piece containing some fruit and cut a tremendous gash across his throat; from which his life-blood leaped with a desperation indicating the great struggle waging in his physical frame.

They hastened to him, and Mead placed a pillow under his head.

“The doctor! the doctor!” he exclaimed, and Costelli was about leaving to summon a servant to fetch a doctor, when she noticed an elongation of the limbs of the sufferer, with other indications of death, and, watching him a moment, she said, placing her hand on Mead’s shoulder : —

"He is dead !"

"Yes," said Mead sorrowfully ; but his eye brightened as he took from his dead comrade's inner vest pocket the letter he was evidently so anxious a few moments before should not be seen, but a look of disappointment settled on his features, as with Costelli looking over his shoulder, he discovered it to be a rambling and egotistical account of the dead man's family in Spain.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OLD LOVE OFF.

WE left Ray accompanying Byrnes and Hans to the precinct station house, to place the latter in custody.

Hans was easily convicted on the evidence and was sentenced by Judge Gunning S. Bedford to five years' hard labor in Sing Sing. An effort was made to induce him to turn State's evidence, as Byrnes was satisfied there were others stronger than he, behind him ; but the stolid German remained true blue.

While, however, Hans declined to turn State's evidence against his associates, even to escape punishment, he was drawn into a confession by Byrnes going into his cell as a fellow culprit, in the disguise of a Cuban sailor.

Hans had never met Verrua, but he told all he knew about Mead, and consequently Byrnes, after several interviews, got all the points on him that he needed to run him to earth or rather jail.

Detectives know by experience that criminals rarely reform, and once engaged in a crime the human repeats the story of the moth and the candle; and the true detective like Pinkerton, Byrnes or Jourdon pursue a man through years until they "get" him, their zeal increasing with each defeat until it almost becomes a personal matter between the criminal and the detective.

With Byrnes on his track, like a sleuth hound, Mead's days are numbered; but he had so often before eluded Pinkerton in the West as well as Young here that probably the knowledge he was "wanted" would not have disturbed his equanimity while exciting his resources to escape the iron grasp of the quiet man.

Ray was the hero of the hour for several days until some other sensation engrossed the popular mind. His heroism secured him his photograph in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, and he was delighted when the affair became a thing of the past, so that he was not questioned for the details by every one he met, many making his acquaintance especially for the purpose.

Fortunately for her, Ray did not mention to Byrnes anything about Estelle's visiting the

bank with her father, who had always deposited there; nor of her mysterious appearance in the crowd that night, like a vision, or the detective would have rapidly constructed a chain of evidence that would have involved the young lady.

But though he did not mention her there was not a waking moment that she was not in his thoughts. Often he dreamed of her, especially of her coming to him in the crowd and so suddenly disappearing.

Estelle haunted his thoughts, like the memory of one dead; for he was satisfied that he should never see her again.

He did not even confide his secret to Lillian, who no longer teased him about the beautiful unknown whom he had so gallantly defended—and consequently they had no more spats or fallings-out.

Lillian really loved Ray; as for him, latterly he did not know whether he loved her still as devotedly as he should, or—or not. He endeavored to persuade himself he did, because he thought it was his duty, but his heart rebelled against the decision of the head, and his thoughts were often filled with images of Estelle.

Ray and Miss Phillips had been engaged for some months, but the wedding-day had never been named. The ladies of the Phillips' family always passed the three summer months at their country residence, on the river, near Farming-

ton, Conn.; and the time for their departure was approaching.

Miss Phillips frequently regretted the separation that would ensue her departure, and intimated how pleasant it would be for Ray to also pass the heated term at the farm.

But, as the ladies say, he did not "take the hint."

He was soon pushed to the wall, however. One morning Mr. Phillips, calling him into his private office, startled him by the proposition that he should be married to his daughter at an early day, before, indeed, she went into the country. He also suggested that if he did not incline to a trip across the ocean, they should pass the summer on his place at Farmington.

Much to Mr. Phillips' surprise Ray was embarrassed by the proposition, instead of being overjoyed, as he naturally supposed he would be.

Ray stammered out in reply something about his great kindness and asked for time for reflection.

"Oh certainly! Quite right!" responded Mr. Phillips; and the two went about their respective engagements.

In the evening Ray talked over the matter with his mother, whose counsel he was always in the habit of seeking.

He frankly confessed to her that since he had met Estelle Verrua his love for Miss Phillips

had experienced a change—in other words he no longer loved her.

His mother ridiculed his attachment for the mysterious beauty whom he might never meet again. Who was she, that they knew nothing about her in society? She advised him to cure himself of the attachment by marrying Lillian Phillips, whom he knew to be a good, worthy girl. The good lady concluded, however, by urging him to follow the dictates of his own heart; as his future happiness would depend on his selection of a wife.

That same evening, in a conference with his wife, Mr. Phillips learned of Ray's adventure with the mysterious beauty, and coincided with her that she was the cause of Ray's change of manner towards his daughter.

The next morning, again calling Ray into his office, Mr. Phillips said:—

“Well, have you thought over that matter?”

“I have, but I am not prepared to give an answer!”

“You are trifling with me, sir!” exclaimed Mr. Phillips indignantly.

Ray made no response.

“Now or never!” roared Mr. Phillips in a towering rage.

“Never,” said Ray resolutely; with a bow he left the apartment and returned to his desk,

In the evening when he detailed the interview to his mother, that good lady exclaimed:—

“Oh my son, you know not what you have done; you have ruined your prospects in life!”

CHAPTER XIX.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

THE funeral had been over several days when Estelle happened to read the announcement of her father's death in the regular notices in the metropolitan daily that was taken at “The Retreat.”

It was quite by chance that in reading a description of an horticultural exhibition, her eyes wandered over to the death notices in the next column.

The announcement was of course a great shock to her, and as soon as she could, she retired to her own room and gave vent to her emotions.

If she had discovered the notice in time to have attended the funeral she would have gone, but it was too late now, and she decided she would not open communications with Mme. Costelli to learn the particulars. She would bury the past in the newly made grave, and alone in the world begin or rather live out the new life she had begun for herself.

It need not be said that for many reasons she never wished to renew the acquaintance of Mead or Costelli; indeed, a constant dread was that she might unexpectedly encounter one or the other some day and the explanations that would be required might compromise her or necessitate explanations that might compel her to leave Mrs. Styles.

CHAPTER XX.

"GREEN GOODS."

BYRNES decided that Mead must be getting very desperate to have planned such a desperate scheme as the assault on the F—— bank, and that it was now merely a question of time when he should fall into his hands for some criminal transaction. He determined to keep on the outlook for him; but being engaged in a well-known forgery case, Byrnes did not devote any personal attention to the matter for a month or more, when Mead reappeared in the street, with the white locks, clean shaven face, gold spectacles, and broadcloth suit, with white necktie, of a retired Methodist preacher.

If he had kept quiet or "shady," Mead might have passed unnoticed, but his limited means compelled him to be active in starting some money producing enterprise.

Their late association at Verrua's had brought Mead and Costelli closer together than they had ever been in all the years of their acquaintance ; and in his retreat, while he was metamorphosing himself he received a call daily from her, as she recognized the value of his counsel.

Costelli, after selling out the Verrua furniture, etc., at Mead's advice took a floor on Sixth Avenue, which she furnished elegantly, and set up as a Spanish fortune-teller, he passing as her husband.

Costelli did a good business as she always told a pleasing tale to her patrons seeking a revelation of the future, and he and she might have passed their days very comfortably, as she had conceived a great affection for him, after Verrua's death, but for the fact that his fertile brain evolved a new "green goods" scheme which has since become very common.

The "green goods," business is the advertising to sell to the avaricious and not over-scrupulous countrymen counterfeit notes at a discount by which they can make a handsome profit if successful in passing them off ; this is what the vendor advertises to do, but he never sends the counterfeit, but a package of blank paper, or a box of sawdust knowing that the countryman will never dare to expose the swindle as he would criminate himself.

Mead one day accidentally encountered an old

associate who had a limited assortment of counterfeit notes which he lacked the nerve, after a spell of sickness, which depleted his pocket-book as well as his courage, to "shove," that is, pass off, for fear of detection.

Mead discovered the notes to be the best piece of counterfeiting he had ever seen ; only an expert by examination with a glass could discover such imperfections as one line in the face here, a button too many on this coat, one star too many here, a blur in the eye of the eagle ; and he evolved a new scheme for the disposal of the notes to the fortune hunting and gullible countrymen.

This was to advertise the sale of a five dollar picture for twenty-five cents, and a ten dollar picture for fifty cents ; to send one of these counterfeit bills of the denomination paid for on receipt of the money with a circular stating that the order could be duplicated by the ten and so on up to a hundred at the rate of fifty per cent. of the face value.

Now the countryman who, "plays" the lottery or green goods game is never discouraged by failure or trickery but is caught by each new announcement as glibly as the fish in the stream ; and Mead's first announcement brought a pile of letters enclosing the necessary amount in postage stamps, to a private letter box which he engaged for the purpose.

The man had comparatively few of these notes, only three hundred thousand, and Mead proposed a way by which he could gather in fifty or sixty thousand and close the game before the authorities would be "onto him;" that is he proposed to deal honestly with his customers, i. e. send them what they paid for, counterfeit bills and not slips of blank paper of the shape of bank-notes, arguing rightly that the samples he sent would prove so satisfactory.

Usually the announcements of the green goods merchants had been very bungling: but Mead evinced positive genius in his advertisements which would be readily understood by the initiated and culpable, and at the same time might attract the unsuspicious but curious who could be tempted.

Observe he advertised a picture worth five dollars; and in his circular he dilated on the fact that a good counterfeit of a five dollar bill was a picture worth that sum.

To use his own words in a few weeks he was doing a "land office business," and had his plans well matured to sell out and get out before he would be wanted, when he met his Nemesis in a popular Turkish bath.

It was well known to Byrnes that Mead had a coiled snake dotted in blue India ink on his right arm, and one day when he chanced to be enjoying a bath, to relieve the rheumatism which thus

early had seized his vigorous frame, he discovered "his man" similarly engaged.

Byrnes did not imagine for a moment that the clerical looking gentleman was the "high-roller" Mead, but he nevertheless "shadowed" him when he left the bath, until his suspicions were aroused and he ran him down, and secured his conviction in General Sessions. I may add that he served his term but died of consumption in this city a year after his release.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND LAST.

OF course thoughts of one another continually haunted Estelle and Ray—the latter in his despondent loneliness since he had broken off his engagement to Miss Phillips (who eventually married Mr. Stone, whose persistency finally won her); while Estelle's remembrance of him was a day-dream.

Neither under the peculiar circumstances ever expected to meet again.

Ray soon after his interview with the President sent in his resignation as the assistant cashier of the bank, having found a similar position in another financial institution; and consequently he did not know whether Estelle had ever drawn

on her deposit or not. He looked for her on the promenade and everywhere he went, but never seeing her concluded she had left the city—perhaps she had gone to Europe and the deposit was made for this purpose.

He happened to be out of town visiting an aunt at Islip, L. I., the day the papers contained the item about Mr. Verrua's suicide and consequently he knew nothing about this melancholy event. In passing the house some little while after he noticed a different name on the door-plate—he was aware of the address because she had given it in making the deposit—and this discovery satisfied him she was absent from the country.

Imagine his joy and surprise one spring morning to see her in Mrs. Styles' carriage in one of the pretty suburban streets of Tarrytown, where he and his mother had gone to board for the summer.

There was the instant mutual recognition of a bow before the second thought decided whether it was proper or not, and thus they came together again.

The adage to the contrary, the course of true love does often run smoothly, and before the November winds began to be suggestive of the approaching winter, they were united in the holy bond of wedlock.

Estelle told her story to Ray's mother—all but

about her father's connection with Mead—and thoroughly enlisted the sympathy and love of that lady, who was delighted that her son should wed such a pretty and worthy girl.

Ray somehow had a delicacy about alluding to her mysterious appearance in the crowd that night, and as she did not mention it he never knew and probably never will know the truth; although he had a very good chance to make the inquiry when after her marriage she transferred the deposit to his name.

I think I have now accounted for all excepting Hans, who after serving his time at Sing Sing, engaged in the historic case of the robbery of the Manhattan Savings Institution, on the corner of Broadway and Bleecker Street, which made Byrnes famous and eventually secured him the appointment which has caused him to be known the world over as the VIDOCQ OF NEW YORK.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEA GIRT SHORE.

IN a certain old and populous neighborhood or settlement on the New England coast near a thriving town on the Shore Line, a little colony of fishermen a mile or more down the road by the inlet, was known as Smith's, from the fact that the most important personage there, the storekeeper, bore that historic name. I speak in the past tense, because since the time I write of, quite a magnificent summer hotel has been erected just below Smith's, and gives the neighborhood its romantic name.

Smith's was the favorite resort for miles around of those who wished to hire boats and bait for fishing and sailing—quite a common custom in the season of parties from the interior towns on a lark, and, consequently, there was nothing unusual in the application, one morning, late in the summer of a bygone year, of three young men to John Allen for his sloop, the

Saucy Sal, riding at anchor in sight, for a cruise of three days down the coast. Having given evidence by sailing her about the inlet that they were fully competent to handle the stout little craft (quite noted as an outside blue-fisher) they obtained control of the Saucy Sal on the payment of twenty-four dollars.

These young men were pleasant-appearing, muscular, jovial, with a flow of animal spirits that led them to be very boisterous and roguish, and inspired them to perpetrate the joke of a mock-quarrel regarding the captaincy of the cruise, which was finally decided by the toss of a copper, in favor of Thomas Jones, who successively defeated his comrades, Richard Bagley and John Moore.

They obtained provisions at Smith's store (an item of which was two stout jugs of New England rum) and were soon under way and out of sight, little thinking that their joke had impressed Allen unfavorably, or that they had led him by their replies to believe they were stopping in the "town," whereas they merely dined there on arriving in the train at noon; which fact the simple minded fisherman ascertained by casual inquiry in the evening, when he went up or in to get his mail, or more strictly speaking the county weekly paper; and coupling this discovery of deception with the fact of the alteration he conceived a prejudice against them

which they would bitterly feel in the near future.

CHAPTER II.

SHIP AHOY.

ON the second morning after sailing the Saucy Sal was spoken by a boat that had subsequently left Smith's, at anchor on the lee shore of a small and uninhabited peninsula of sand and stunted growth, on the coast, several miles to the eastward, almost within range of Montauk's famous light. This boat, which was nameless or I should give the name, had anchored over night astern of the Saucy Sal, but the fog had been so dense that not even her lights had been noticed.

No one was stirring aboard the Saucy Sal, and no answer was made to the fisherman's stentorian "Ship Ahoy!" and but for the fact that a small boat was afloat astern, it would have been concluded that all hands had gone ashore—though no one was visible on the island. Prompted by a spirit of sociability rather than curiosity, the fisherman who had a party of gentlemen bound for Block Island for shark-fishing, boarded the Saucy Sal in his yawl, taking along with him a lawyer from Boston, who, chagrined at his ill-luck trolling for blue-fish the day before, wished to learn how the strangers had fared.

Peeping into the little cabin through the dead light, on reaching the side of the sloop, the fisherman saw Bagley and Moore sound asleep, one in a bunk improvised on the bench and the other on a pallet on the floor, beside the centre-board.

A bump of their boat against the sloop aroused the sleepers, and they were requested to come aboard by Bagley. Descending to the cabin, where Bagley and Moore made their toilets by putting on their shoes, they found the other or corresponding bunk unoccupied, but bearing evidence of having been recently vacated.

Bagley and Moore expressed surprise that it was so late—a glorious, radiant sun, dispelling the mist and tempering the fresh morning air, was almost two hours old—and, rubbing their eyes and foreheads, in an endeavor to brace up without too precipitate a recourse to the invigorating cocktail—stated they had drunk a good deal over night; of which there was evidence in the uncorked jug on the shelf, and the unwashed glasses standing around.

“Where is your fren’?” inquired the fisherman, who had noted their number when they sailed from Smith’s.

“Oh! Tom! Where is he?” said Bagley, glancing at the deserted bunk opposite his own, and then placing his mouth to the dead light overhead and calling;—

"Tom! Tom! I guess he is forward; haven't you seen him?"

"There's no one for'ward, unless he's in the hold," said the fisherman, glancing at the hatchway.

"The cover is down," observed the lawyer, who had returned to the cockpit and glanced over the deck.

"No!" exclaimed Bagley, passing him. "He's gone ashore then!"

"No, your boat is here," responded the lawyer, significantly pointing to the yawl astern.

"He's hiding somewhere for a joke," said Moore, also coming up from the little cabin, followed by the fisherman, who exchanged glances with the lawyer.

"He was as drunk as a boiled owl last night," continued Moore. "Tom! I say Tom! Come, Tom, no fooling now; we've got visitors!"

But there was no response, nor did the expectant Tom appear.

"He's shut himself in the forecastle," said Bagley, going forward and raising the cover of the hold, looking down. "He's not here. Why, I wonder what's become of him?"

The others came forward, and joined Bagley.

"I don't know what to make of this," said Bagley, sitting on the gunwale.

Several red stains and spots on the other side of the deck here attracted the attention of

the lawyer. He stooped and examined the same.

"Blood?" he inquired of Bagley.

"Yes," Bagley replied, "Tom's nose bled terribly last night; it always does when he drinks too much. We held him over here;" and, looking down the side, there was discovered several red stains.

"There are blood-stains on your cuffs," said the lawyer, suddenly, eyeing Bagley closely, "and yours, too," he added, clutching and holding up Moore's hand.

"Yes," replied Bagley, unconcernedly; "he was drunk when his nose commenced bleeding, and we had a great deal of trouble holding him."

"I guess we were drunk ourselves, as for that matter," said Moore, laughingly, "and held him bunglingly."

The lawyer and the fisherman glanced inquiringly at each other; the former moved a step or two forward, looked down into the waters rippling around the stem of the graceful craft, then round about and out upon the sea, while the lawyer went back into the cabin with Bagley and Moore.

"Why, here are blood-spots, too!" exclaimed the lawyer, observing several on the floor.

"Yes," replied Bagley; "he commenced bleeding here, and bled a good deal before we got him on deck. See!" and he took from a locker above

the closet a handkerchief incarnadined and still moist.

"H'm!" ejaculated the lawyer, uneasily glancing around.

"I say!" exclaimed the fisherman, forward—"I say, what has become of that other anker?"

"Lost," answered Bagley, standing in the hatchway; "lost yesterday. I threw it overboard by mistake, and, cable not being fastened, down she went."

The fisherman came aft and joined the lawyer on the after-deck.

Bagley and Moore went into the cabin, and hastily "stowed" their bunks, and put things to rights generally.

"What do you suspicion!" whispered the fisherman to the lawyer.

"What do you think?" asked the lawyer, quietly.

"Foul play," replied the fisherman firmly.

"Can't say!" exclaimed the lawyer, evasively.

"What's to be done?" inquired the fisherman, anxiously.

"Depends," said the lawyer musingly.

"We can't let 'em escape," said the fisherman.

"No!"

"No!"

"But it's ticklish business," continued the fisherman, slowly, "You're a lawyer; you'd ought to know what to do."

"I don't want to excite them or to wound their feelings," responded the lawyer.

"Them there blood-stains ain't been there more'n eight or ten hours at most," said the fisherman, nervously gesticulating forward.

"No; they're evidently fresh," said the lawyer. "Their explanation of them is ingenious, but not plausible. I'm afraid they have had a drunken quarrel, whether in anger or exhilaration I am not prepared to say; and that the struggle has resulted in their friend's death—at all events, disappearance."

"Jus' so," said the fisherman—"jus' so; that's what I think. Now I suspicions they warn't sich good frens as they mought be, 'cause they quarrelled afore starting—so Allen told me; an' I suspicions they murdered him last night in the cabin, stopped the bleeding with that hankchief, hauled him for'ard, fastened that missin' anker, and chucked the two overboard."

"You form the theory that the prosecution'll doubtless adopt," said the lawyer complacently. "I was about forming some such theory myself."

"I hope they'll swing for this," said the fisherman.

"Eh!" said the lawyer, deprecatingly. "I must believe them innocent till they are convicted."

"I s'pose so."

Bagley and Moore came from the cabin to the cockpit.

The lawyer and fisherman separated, and the former joined them, the other going to the side, where his yawl was fastened.

"This is a most singular affair," said Bagley; "I cannot admit of any other thought than that he is playing us some joke, and will reappear in good time."

"I do not know what to think," said Moore. "I can scarcely credit my senses!"

"Cud your fren' swim?" inquired the fisherman.

"Like a fish under water—like a duck on top, if he chose?" replied Bagley.

"Oh, he isn't drowned!" exclaimed Moore.

"You think so?" observed the fisherman, meaningly but not exciting their attention.

There was a pause.

"Ahem! what do you propose to do?" asked the lawyer, gravely.

"Why, to make every effort to find him, if he doesn't return soon!" exclaimed Bagley.

"You'll remain and help us?" said Moore.

"We'll remain," responded the fisherman.

"Yes, we'll remain," said the lawyer.

The fisherman toyed with his painter, while the lawyer musingly tapped on the gunwale with his fingers.

Moore and Bagley communed with their

thoughts, wondering what had become of their friend.

"Hem!" began the lawyer, finally. "What was the last seen of your friend?"

"He was asleep in his bunk," both replied, instantly.

Bagley continued:

"I did not go to sleep till I saw him safe and and sound in dreamland, as I felt uneasy about him."

"I can scarcely realize that I am not sleeping now, and dreaming a horrible dream," said Moore.

"Singular!" ejaculated the lawyer. He asked, after a pause, "Was your friend subject to vertigo or epileptic fits, or moods of despondency?"

"Nothing of the kind," replied Bagley. "Why I never saw him more cheerful than last night."

"When did yer come to anker here?" asked the fisherman, jumping into his yawl, which he had pulled up by the painter.

"Last night at sundown," replied Moore.

The fisherman loosened the painter and steadied the yawl alongside for the lawyer to get in.

"Will you come over and breakfast with us?" inquired the lawyer, stepping into the small-boat.

"No, thanks; we have provisions," replied Bagley. "But I, for one, have no-appetite."

"I don't want anything," said Moore.

"Adieu, then, till after breakfast," said the lawyer, as the fisherman shoved the yawl into the stream and took up his oars.

Bagley and Moore, who, though naturally alarmed at their friend's absence, did not for a moment doubt but that he would reappear in good time, proceeded to put the ship to rights, jokingly execrating their absent comrade for shirking his duties. They ate a sparing breakfast.

CHAPTER III.

SUSPECTED.

IN a little while the lawyer and fisherman returned. In the boat they brought a pair of oyster-tongs.

"Going to dig for oysters?" inquired Bagley.

"No," replied the fisherman, laconically.

"It occurs to us," said the lawyer, gravely, "that your friend may have accidentally fallen overboard and drowned—"

"An' I'm goin' to grapple for the body," said the fisherman.

"Oh God!" exclaimed Bagley, "you don't think that?"

"Oh, I wish I had sat up all night with him!" exclaimed Moore.

"We must hope for the best," said the lawyer.

The fisherman put his tongs down into the water, and eagerly watched by the other three and followed all around the boat by them, he as eagerly dredged, or, rather, grappled, for the body that he was confident he should reclaim with the missing anchor lashed to it.

He was disappointed, however; although he thoroughly dredged the water in a circumference of thirty feet or more, he did not find the body.

As he said, the currents were so diverse hereabouts, and the tides equally strong, no hope could be entertained of the body going ashore; it would be washed out to sea, and, before being brought back, mutilated by the rough treatment of the waters beyond recognition; then stranded on some point or reef till dismembered, the dissevered portions going shoreward in various directions, so that they could be taken, when found, only for what they were, fragments of a human body, exciting curiosity, but not serviceable in elucidating the crime.

The fisherman was satisfied that the body had been consigned to the waters, and concluded that it had been carried away by the tide, since he could not find it.

"I'll bet he is hiding somewhere on the shore watching us!" exclaimed Bagley, hauling in the dinky. "He swam ashore!"

"Oh, he must be somewhere about," said Moore, uneasily.

“We’ll search the shore, eh, Mister Lawyer?” said the fisherman knowingly.

“Yes; we’ll assist,” replied the lawyer, indicating to him by his facial expression to be cautious, and not to say too much.

They all got into the dingy, and Bagley pulled them ashore.

The peninsula, which covered an area of about twenty acres, rose from the water in a gentle undulation running into several hills. It was covered with a stunted growth of meadow grass, with here and there patches of dwarfed cedar-tree, or, more properly speaking, bushes.

They first made a tour of the shore, all the way round, and then separating and branching off, they faithfully searched the bushes and grass, Bagley and Moore every now and then calling out: “Tom! Tom!”

When they returned to the sloop after their fruitless search their hopes began to fail them, but each inwardly resolved to bear up till the last.

The lawyer, who furtively watched them closely, was very favorably impressed by their bearing, which was simply unaffected. He argued to himself that if they had committed an atrocious crime, they would seek to divert suspicion by an assumption of innocence; at all events, if they were the hardened villains that the deed and their arrangements for the same would

show them to be, they would have trumped up some plausible tale to account for their friend's disappearance.

The fisherman, predisposed to believe in their guilt, was highly incensed at what he considered the devilish courage of the young men in maintaining their self-possession and so firmly refusing to believe their friend dead, when in their own mind they knew he was; and he chafed under the restraint of silence regarding his own theory which the lawyer imposed on him.

If the fisherman had his own way, he would have boldly charged them with the crime of murdering their late friend, in the expectation that they would cower in alarm before him, and confess all.

"They'd ought to confess," he mentally exclaimed, "and set us on the right track. Onct down to Marbilhead, I seen a man caught a-stealin' fish from a smack; at fust he denied that he wuz a-stealin' on 'em, sayin' he ment for to buy 'em; but we told him if he'd confess he he wuz a-stealin', he cud hev the fish; an' he sed he wuz; an' we give him the fish; and he went on his way rejoicin'. He sed it did him good to confess; an' it made us feel so good, too, that we gave him the fish. No man likes to think himself in the wrong, an' we were glad to find that we were not in the wrong regardin' him a-stealin'."

The blood-spots on the deck fascinated him; and he watched them with unfeigned anxiety, as if he was afraid the young men might remove them unperceived; he sheltered them from the effacing effects of the sun, by a piece of tarpaulin.

He found, under a coil of rope near the telltale blood-spots, an old jackknife, whose rusty blade was incrustated with dull, brown-red stains—the rust of blood.

He held the knife up triumphantly.

“Used to cut bait with,” said Bagley, sententially.

“H’m!” ejaculated the lawyer; but an examination of the stains divested the knife of the interest it at first excited in him.

As the hours passed and Jones did not return—alas! he was beyond return—Moore and Bagley began to realize their loss, and were completely overwhelmed with grief, not once thinking of the embarrassing position the circumstance had placed them in.

Moore went into the cabin, sat on the bunk lately occupied by his missing friend, buried his face in his hands, unable to control—indeed, unable to comprehend—his emotions; while Bagley, thoroughly unnerved at first, remained in the cockpit and toyed nervously with a piece of string, unobservant of everything around him.

They could not bring themselves to think of their missing friend as dead; they both cherished

a vague hope that he would reappear in good time, though they dared not calmly consider the facts, lest such should banish this delusion. That, in consequence of a recurrence of the flux at the nose, their friend might have arisen from his bunk while they slept, and gone forward and leaned over the gunwale to let his olfactory organ bleed, lost his balance, had fallen overboard, and drowned in a useless struggle in the water, did not occur to them; no, they could not,—the discovery came upon them so suddenly and strangely, regard him as dead.

It was an outrageous trick to play them, but they hoped they should find him at Smith's, having slipped them during the night and returned in a passing boat.

Bagley made an observation to the lawyer to this effect, on which that personage shook his head doubtfully.

"I'll bet yer five dullers you don't," the fisherman could not refrain from responding.

No notice, however, was taken of this coarse sally; the young men from the first instinctively experienced a dislike to the fisherman; while he, as we know, was prejudiced against them.

"Having searched for and failed to find the body," the lawyer said, gravely, after a pause, "we had better return to Smith's."

"We?" said Bagley. "Shall you accompany us?"

"Me, too?" interposed the fisherman, before the lawyer could reply.

"Yes," said the lawyer; "you will have to place this matter before the authorities, and we shall be needed as witnesses."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Bagley, musingly.

"It is a very embarrassing affair," continued the lawyer, "and I wish I was not in it."

"I would give ten years of my future life to be able to go back into the past to yesterday afternoon, when Tom sat just where you are, as jolly as a lark!" said Bagley.

"I hope you will come out all right," said the lawyer.

"What!" exclaimed Bagley, breathlessly, "You don't mean—you don't mean to insinuate, —"

"That you two must show you had nothing to do with the disappearance of your friend, unless you can satisfactorily account for his absence," replied the lawyer, firmly, eying him sharply with the self-possession of one accustomed to such trying scenes.

"My God!" exclaimed Bagley, in tones of anguish. "Moore! Moore! Do you hear this?" and he sank back in his seat as if bewildered and unable to comprehend matters.

Moore came up from the cabin.

"We loved one another like brothers," he said, huskily, and clinging to the triested

boom for support, he sank into a seat beside Bagley.

"Of course, the affair must be investigated by the authorities," said the lawyer; "and I should think you would seek such investigation."

"We will!" they simultaneously ejaculated.

The lawyer, after some further conversation in which he was very careful not to wound their feelings by any insinuation or imputation, advised them to compose themselves—in fact, to go below and rest—while he and the fisherman navigated the craft back to Smith's, but they preferred to remain on deck and assist, and were permitted to do so; at all events, the lawyer allowed them to assist him in obeying the orders of the fisherman, who, from this time forth, would have nothing to do with them. "Murderers!" he mentally ejaculated, whenever he glanced at them. Neither their assistance, nor that of the lawyer was needed, however, after the anchor had been weighed, except in working the centre-board, for the fisherman at the helm easily managed the sheets.

The breeze was in their favor, and, dexterously kept close to the wind, the little sloop fairly flew through the wavelets.

They came to anchor in the harbor at Smith's, towards the close of the afternoon.

Inasmuch as there would have to be an examination of the blood-stains on the deck (he did

not say this much to them), the lawyer advised Moore and Bagley to remain on board till he brought the authorities, rather than they should go and surrender themselves.

He left for the village immediately on arriving ; Moore and Bagley shutting themselves up in the cabin to avoid the cold, suspicious glances of the fisherman.

The fisherman remained on board to keep watch. He sat on the gunwale forward, with his face resting on his hands, supported by his knees, and guarded the fatal blood-spots as if he were apprehensive they would rub out in his sight, his wish being the antithesis of Lady Macbeth's.

The lawyer said nothing about the affair in the settlement, and so the arrival did not excite the sensation which it would have done had the facts been noised around. Allen came on board, of course, and shook his head dubiously on meeting Moore and Bagley. He coincided with the fisherman in believing them guilty of a terrible crime, and, to their great relief, kept aloof from them, in keeping with his friend, with whom he conversed in an undertone, and concurred in his theory of a drunken murder.

CHAPTER IV.

ARRESTED.

THE lawyer made his statement to the Justice of the Peace, and he issued the requisite orders to the constable, who returned with him.

Moore and Bagley voluntarily surrendered themselves to the constable, on his approach, and he took charge of them. He placed a deputy in charge of the craft—which by this time was surrounded by a fleet of small boats from the settlement, with the occupants clamorous to see the “murderers” and the blood-stains—and returned to town with his prisoners.

That night Moore and Bagley passed in jail, and for the first time painfully realized the fact that they were suspected of murdering their missing friend; until now they had supposed they had the sympathy and confidence of all, excepting, indeed, that of the fisherman, and that the investigation hinted at by the lawyer would be a mere formality. It is in the dark hours of adversity when the adage that “Misfortunes never come singly,” is painfully realized by actual experience. Their thoughts kept them awake until a late hour, when they sank into sleep from sheer physical exhaustion.

The lawyer telegraphed in their names for their parents, as well as for the father of Jones.

Moore and Bagley resided with their parents in New York, within a few hours' ride of the town ; and their parents were with them in the evening, terribly distressed by the position they found them in.

Jones was a resident of Brooklyn, and his father would not arrive till the next morning. He telegraphed he should come on.

Moore and Bagley were taken before the Justice of the Peace the next morning, a tall, slender, cadaverous man, with a sullen, discontented expression of countenance, to whom the case offered the opportunity to distinguish himself, it being the first of the kind that had ever come before him.

The lawyer made a simple statement of the facts and circumstances ; the fisherman was prevented from expressing his "suspicions," but his gestures and leers were very prejudicial to Moore and Bagley, who made a straightforward statement, which the Justice could not shake by an ingenious cross-examination.

Allen's testimony regarding the quarrel between the young men before starting, was very damaging to them, creating the impression that a feud existed between the friends. He was careful to state they had deceived him when hiring the boat, by conveying the impression that they were stopping at **the** hotel in the village.

The evidence was all against them.

The fact that every one seemed to be against them, and fierce in their determination to brand them "murderers," impressed the young men even more painfully than previously, and considerably lessened their confidence and self-possession; and the change in their demeanor which the change in their minds caused, was construed into being the workings of stricken consciences.

It was admitted by the prisoners, and demonstrated by the coroner's testimony, that the stains on the deck were those of human blood.

The gory handkerchief was exhibited. The knife, with the incarnadined blade, was identified by Allen as one belonging to the sloop, and used for cutting bait; and merriment was excited in the auditory by Bagley's avowal that, though they had industriously fished the whole day, they had caught nothing.

The Justice declared that the prisoners' explanation of the blood-stains on the deck was not plausible; that the knife being found *hidden* near by was significant; that the blood-stains on their cuffs were significant, and that all the testimony conduced to excite the suspicion that a terrible crime had been committed.

He decided to send the case to the higher court and consequently the prisoners were committed to await their trial.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRISONERS.

MOORE and Bagley had made the acquaintance of Jones at school, at Norwalk, Conn., some three years previously. Although Jones had twice, the present summer and the previous one, stayed with them several days at their respective homes, they had never been to see him in Brooklyn (which Gothamites have from time immemorial regarded as a terrible journey) and were not acquainted with the father, his only surviving parent.

Mr. Jones did not seek an interview with them as they hoped he would. Immediately on his arrival, after learning the result of the investigation by the Justice of the Peace, he sought the fisherman, and received from him the impression, which soon amounted to a conviction, that his son had been murdered by the prisoners.

He declined to see the fathers of the young men when they called that evening to make his acquaintance, intending thereby to intimate to them very plainly that it was to be war to the knife between them.

He was a cold, reserved, calculating, very successful business man, totally different from his warm-hearted, free, impulsive son. He had been all along prejudiced against these young

men for the reason that he thought they were leading his son astray ; whereas, the fact was, that if any one did the leading, it was Tom himself, who was by far the wildest and most dissipated of the three. Parents constantly make a mistake by thus refusing to admit or failing to perceive the shortcomings of their children, who are no nearer perfection than those they associate with—a fact which is immediately recognized by disinterested or critical observers, but which we ourselves are the last to discover.

So Jones naturally threw all the blame on the friends, Bagley and Moore, for leading his son astray, when, if there was any one to blame, it was his own hopeful.

He loved Tom passionately, in his undemonstrative, latent way—indeed he was completely wrapped up in him, and the telegram announcing his disappearance momentarily deprived him of his reason.

He was a man who had himself under thorough control, and he controlled himself now. No one, to look at his stern, hard-set, impassive features, could imagine how great was his grief for his son ; they might conclude, because there was no outward display of sorrow, that he, man of business as he was, had experienced none. The loss of his son had turned the honey of the love that he bore for him into the gall of revenge, and he became at once the foremost and bitterest

accuser of the young men. He was implacable, refused to see their parents, to go to see them, to listen to any theory that did not evolve murder.

He entered on the prosecution with the energy of purpose characteristic of his nature. He caused the authorities to offer a reward for the recovery of the body, and offered an additional and larger one himself.

He started several expeditions in search of the body; he went in one himself, and the search was so thorough, that if the body had been anywhere in the territory searched, it would have been discovered.

The coast for miles was searched by the authorities as well as volunteer parties prompted by curiosity as well as sympathy. The conclusion was that the body had been carried to sea, and would probably never come to light.

Mr. Bagley, who was better off than Mr. Moore, applied to Headquarters in New York and secured the services of a young detective, whose youthful appearance and reserved manner was so different from the popular idea of such a person that he would not have found any confidence in his competency but for the fact that he impressed all with his ability by his never asking unnecessary or trifling questions and never making any promises or predictions tending to excite false hopes, but carefully gathering all the data he went about his work earnestly and unostentatiously.

The young detective was "Tom Byrnes," then quite unknown to fame but already recognized in the department as a "good man."

Byrnes went over the facts and the locale without volunteering a theory—Tom's disappearance might have been premeditated, might have been accidental; a crime might have been committed—but there was no clue beyond the bold fact that he was missing.

Byrnes declared the case belonged to the lawyers now rather than the detective.

A phase and an important one to be developed by Byrnes was that Tom was engaged to be married to a young cousin, who accompanied the father, and who was stricken with grief. To her, at the hotel, after breakfasting, just before leaving for Smith's, Tom had scribbled a few lines, as follows:

"DARLING NELLY: In an awful hurry; no time to write more than a few lines; am going off on a sailing cruise for three days. You may never hear from me again, but my last thoughts will be of you.

"Your devoted,
"TOM."

The father argued that the last clause in the letter intimated that there was trouble between Tom and his friends, and that he had a foreboding of his end when he wrote; and he succeeded in inspiring all with whom he conversed on the

subject with his own theory that the murder had been committed in the cabin with the knife ; that the blood had been sopped up in the handkerchief, the body conveyed forward, lashed to the missing anchor, and thrown overboard, but not before some blood had dripped to the deck, which, if they had not been surprised, Bagley and Moore would have removed in the morning when over their delirium of drink. He created an intense popular prejudice against the young men which was even manifested toward their parents, who had taken up their abode in town, so as to be able to visit their sons in prison daily.

Byrnes did not consider the letter as important as the others ; that is that it had any bearing on the case, the intimation in the last sentence he considered a joke.

The consciousness of their innocence gave the youthful prisoners strength of heart and mind to endure calmly their imprisonment, and confidently anticipate an acquittal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIAL.

THE trial attracted much attention. A New York paper had it reported by a special corre-

spondent. It consumed several days. It was an epoch in the history of the town.

Messrs. Bagley and Moore engaged eminent counsel from their own city to defend their sons. Mr. Jones was satisfied to let the prosecution be made by the district-attorney, an able lawyer by the way, who has since achieved political distinction in Congress.

The chain of evidence woven by the astute district-attorney was very complete, and intended to be supplemented by an equally conclusive noose of hemp-rope for each of the prisoners.

The witnessess called by the prosecution were: Allen, who (1) showed that the young men were capable of practising deceit by their imposing on him in regard to their stopping at the hotel; and (2) that they were evidently not good friends before they started on the cruise.

The lawyer, who recounted his going on board of the Saucy Sal, and subsequent discoveries, the young men by their conduct impressing him they were innocent of any crime.

The fisherman, who gave his account, which only differed from the lawyer's in that the demeanor of the young men satisfied him they were guilty of murdering their friend.

The constable testified to arresting the young men and examining the boat.

The letter was offered, but ruled out.

Mr. Jones testified that his son was sober,

amiable and confiding, and did not mention to him in a letter written two days before from New York anything about the trip.

Here the prosecution rested.

The counsel for the defence opened their side by calling several townsmen of the prisoners to testify to their good characters.

One of these witnesses was with the prisoners and Jones the night before they left the city, and there was nothing evident of any feud existing between them then.

The parents of the prisoners testified to the same effect.

Moore was placed on the stand, and told a plain, straightforward story, evincing emotion when he alluded to his missing friend. He denied that any imposition was intended by the remarks which conveyed to Allen that they were stopping at the hotel; and, as regards the quarrel, it was agreed upon among themselves as a joke on Allen, who was asked who began it and who figured most actively in it.

Allen, recalled, remembered that Jones was the one who misled him in regard to the hotel, and and also was the author of the quarrel.

Bagley was called and corroborated Moore's testimony, adding that he was the last that saw Jones, as he remained awake till his friend had fallen asleep, as he knew he would need his assistance if his nose bled again.

The defence had no more witnesses, and the case was adjourned till next day.

In the summing up, the defence admitted that it was a strong case of circumstantial evidence, and expatiated on the theory of suicide, holding that the allusion in the letter pointed as much to this as anything else. A pretty picture of the social relations of the parties was drawn, and a feeling tribute paid to the memory of Jones.

The summing up of the prosecuting officer was a very able effort. He made a theatrical use of the handkerchief, knife and blood-spots, dwelling especially upon the stains on the cuffs of the prisoners, and drew a dramatic picture of the young men murdering their friend (even as Cæsar was assassinated by stabs from those he believed to be his friends) because of animosity inspired by the chagrin that he had won by the toss of a penny the captaincy of the cruise. He cited authorities to prove that the tides and currents were so strong and diverse in the locality that the body must have been carried to sea, and probably would never be recovered. He placed no faith in the prisoners' testimony that they all had been drunk. He ridiculed the theory of the defence that Jones had committed suicide. He had found it impossible to entertain but one theory; that was, that Jones had been cruelly murdered by his friends, and then thrown overboard.

The judge in his charge said the prisoners must either be acquitted or convicted ; their friend had disappeared from their midst in a manner leaving no doubt of his death. The young men at the bar were either guilty of causing his death or innocent. The testimony presented by the prosecution certainly excited the suspicion that a horrible murder had been committed ; yet the theory of suicide of the defence was plausible, the testimony and explanations of the prisoners plausible and consistent. It was evident, however, that the judge inclined toward the theory that the friends had quarrelled and fought.

The jury retired in charge of an officer, and remained out six hours.

The judge and counsel went out for refreshments. The officer having the prisoners in charge offered to take them out for refreshments also, but, of course, they had no appetite for anything and preferred to remain in their seats, in conversation with their male relatives, their respective mothers having been persuaded by the counsel to keep away this final day. The prisoners were both much excited, pale and worn, but hopeful in the consciousness of their innocence.

Mr. Jones, the bereaved father, who had sat on the other side of the inclosure semi-circling the seat of justice with the prosecuting officer, paced the small space with bowed head. "An eye for an eye ; a tooth for a tooth," saith the Scriptures.

Was he hungry for the lives of these two in atonement for his son's death?

The crowd that filled the space allotted it waited patiently for the verdict, evidently more interested than the prisoners themselves, to judge by the earnest discussion that was going on among them.

The hours wore on; terrible hours of suspense to the prisoners and those immediately concerned; dreary hours of curiosity to the spectators, with no other thought on the subject probably than to get away—to their dinners.

The sunbeams that had glorified the windows disappeared; daylight faded away, and the oil-lamps, with large tin reflectors, that were lighted, filled the room with shadows and obscure corners, imparting a mystery to the solemnity of the occasion.

The gloom awes all into silence or whispers. The only evidence of animation, so quiet do all remain, is the ticking of the clock on the wall facing the throne of the judge.

At length the door by which the jury left is opened, and they file in, and gravely take their seats, looking solemn and determined.

This action of life infuses those in the chamber and dispels the silence, and there is a hum of voices, clearing of throats and changing of positions.

The judge, counsel, and prosecuting officer,

having been sent for, return and take their places.

The clerk proceeds with the formula of calling the roll, and says :

“Prisoners, arise ! Jurors, look upon the prisoners ! Prisoners, look upon the jury ! Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict ?”

There is a breathless silence ; greater now is the suspense ; the secret will be known in a moment.

The foreman of the jury gravely answers :

“We have.”

The clerk says : “Gentlemen of the jury, how find you : are the prisoners at the bar guilty or not guilty ?”

Foreman of the jury—“*Guilty !*”

Moore sinks into his chair like a man stricken with the palsy.

Bagley leans on his father’s arm and sobs.

A breath of relief is audible throughout the audience, and there is a general stir among them. Some pay their bets on the spot.

The clerk gravely says :

“Gentlemen of the jury, listen to your verdict ! You find the prisoners at the bar guilty, and so say you all ?”

The jurors answer affirmatively—“We do.”

The district-attorney glances at his watch, and moves for sentence.

The judge says: "Prisoners at the bar, have you anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon you?"

Bagley, at the instigation of his counsel, answers: "We are innocent!"

Moore, controlling himself, repeats: "We are innocent!"

The judge then pronounces the sentence:

"You have each of you had a fair and impartial trial, you have been ably and devotedly defended by your counsel, but the jury, sworn to give deliberate, true and impartial consideration to the evidence, have found you guilty of the terrible crime of murder. It now becomes my painful duty, under the law, and as presiding judge of this court, to pass the sentence of the law upon you. And, before doing so, I would desire to direct your minds to the just consideration of your guilt, and to use your utmost endeavors to prepare yourselves to meet your fate manfully and religiously.

"Your victim was hurried unprepared before his God, while you are given ample time to prepare; and I earnestly hope you will devote the rest of your time to the preparation necessary to secure your admission to the abode of bliss through the means opened unto us by our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Wise and religious men will, doubtless, attend you henceforth, teaching you the errors of your former life,

and devotedly guide you through the remainder.

“Give yourselves no hopes of executive clemency, but pay heed to the teachings which will be given you. Now the sentence of this court is, that you both be taken hence to the common jail of this county, there to remain till the — day of ———, 187—, on which day, between the hours of nine and twelve in the morning, you will be taken to the jail-yard, and there be hanged by the neck till you are dead ; and may God, in His infinite wisdom, have mercy on your souls !”

The prisoners were removed to the jail in a limp, insensible condition, able to walk while supported by strong arms, but mentally dazed.

CHAPTER VII.

ADJUDGED GUILTY.

ADJUDGED guilty ! Convicted on the evidence ! Waste of words to protest their innocence ; who ever believes the declarations of a criminal, unless it is a confession of guilt ?

“They all say they’re innocent,” the keeper declares unfeelingly.

Bagley and Moore found that no one believed in their innocence excepting their parents ; on the contrary, it was evidently the thought of all, even

of the clergymen who attended them; but now that they were convicted, and would certainly expiate their crime on the gallows, they should make a confession.

The consciousness of their innocence that had sustained them through the trial tranquillized their minds, and enabled them to bear with fortitude the present ordeal.

They were truly brave, were these young men; and—brave men are accustomed to consider facts calmly and courageously—they, as soon as they recovered themselves, brought their minds to a realization, or, rather, a contemplation, of their position; they resolved to conduct themselves like men. If it was to be their fate to die on the gallows, innocent of the crime imputed to them, they would meet their doom like true men, strong in the consciousness of their innocence.

It was not, it is true, until after, or, rather, through, severe mental travail that they brought themselves to this frame of mind. The thought was horrible, maddening, that they should so soon have to yield up their young lives—their lives now dear to them; but they were brave men, and brave men quietly obtain control of themselves, and maintain it. That they should die innocent inspired them with the spirit that animates the martyr.

The guilty murderer is haunted day and night, through the long hours of his imprisonment, by

the spectre of his victim, which stalks to the scaffold with him, and stands before him the last thing on earth.

Recollections of many happy hours with Jones filled the minds of Bagley and Moore, and they experienced a happiness in the contemplation of their innocence that is not the lot of the guilty, even after the mind has been relieved by a confession, and the terrible secret is no longer a secret.

The clergyman found them ready and willing disciples.

CHAPTER VIII.

BYRNES'S ADVICE.

MR. BAGLEY somehow had faith that Byrnes could yet be of service to him in his distress, and after the trial and sentence he again visited him.

"Petition the Governor," advised Byrnes. "Delay matters as long as possible. Time often works wonders in elucidating mysteries. Obtain as much delay as possible."

"Yes—but is there—is there any hope in your opinion, Mr. Byrnes?"

"Hum—I have a theory—a theory but don't consider me now—see the Governor."

"Your manner rather than your words gives a

strange hope and strength. I will not ask you any questions but—remember me eventually and give me the benefit, the blessings of your thoughts.”

The fathers set about circulating a petition to the Governor for a reprieve, which was signed generally by friends of the several parties in New York and Brooklyn, but not much anywhere else, the belief in their guilt, despite their protestations, being popular.

The clergyman had made the acquaintance of Jones's betrothed, and he bethought himself of strengthening the array of names on the petition with hers. He knew it was useless to endeavor to obtain Mr. Jones's; he, in his bitter anguish, would never be satisfied till the prisoners had expiated their crime.

Mr. Jones returned to New York after the trial; the young lady, Miss Depew, had gone to Boston to visit some relatives, seeking to obtain relief from her afflictions by a change of air and scene. To her the clergyman went; his account of the prisoners excited her desire to see them personally, and, in an interview with them, they succeeded in so strongly impressing her with their innocence, that she not only signed the petition, but also accompanied the two fathers when they presented it to the Governor.

The Governor was an old lawyer, and, after carefully reviewing the testimony, he sustained

the sentence of the court, declaring that they had been convicted on the evidence. He granted a respite of four weeks, which deferred the execution three months from date of sentence.

The slender hope of reprieve banished, the prisoners prepared themselves to manfully meet their approaching doom, happy in the consciousness of their innocence. The fatal day drew near.

CHAPTER IX.

HOME AGAIN.

A NOBLE steamer ploughs her way to a pier on the North River belonging to the South American line.

As soon as she touches the pier a young man looking like a seafaring man, hops ashore on the string piece and is hastening off the dock when he is stopped—stopped by Byrnes, but not knowing who he is he is not as much taken aback as he would naturally otherwise have been.

On seeing him, Byrnes, who was as nonchalant as if asking for a light for his cigar, touched his arm and inquired :—

“Is not your name Tom Jones?”

“Yes.”

"And you disappeared from a sloop—"

"Yes, sir, in Long Island Sound."

"Where are you going?"

"To my father."

"He will be glad to see you," replied Byrnes, turning away.

Let us follow the young sailor.

To a bee-hive of business offices on Beaver Street he goes, and into an office.

He looks around him wildly.

"Do you know any one here, sir?" inquires a clerk.

"No, sir, I think not," slowly replies the sailor.

"Is Mr. Jones in?"

"No, sir," replies the other, "He went out two months ago."

"Can you tell where to?"

"No, sir, he's gone out of business, I believe," responded the clerk. Then, glancing over his memorandum book, he scribbled an address on a card. "Here's his address," he said, handing it to the other, "There's where he wanted his letters sent. H'm! got any smuggled goods to sell?"

"Thank you," said the young sailor, glancing at the address, and then crumpling the card in his hand. "No, sir: I'm not a peddler."

He withdrew with a bow, and is off to Broadway and in an up-going stage as quick as his legs can carry him.

He alights, and hastens to a stately dwelling on a fashionable side-street and rings the bell.

His summons is answered by a liveried attendant, whose appearance surprises him.

"Mr. Jones in?" he inquires.

"Mr. Jones?"

"Yes," he falters.

"Oh! ah!—yes. He does not live here now. I did not know whom you meant; we took the house from him going on six weeks ago. H'm, Mr. Jones's gone to Europe, I believe," and the flunky almost closed the door in his face.

The young sailor presses his hand to his forehead as if to collect or control his thoughts; he gathers himself up with an effort, and then hastens away to the stage-route, and goes up-town.

He proceeds to an elegant mansion, and rings the bell.

"Mrs. Lyons in?" he asks of the attendant.

"Yes, sir."

"Say to her that her nephew wishes to see her," and he strode past the attendant into a parlor.

A voice upstairs is heard to say, "It must be some mistake; but I will see him."

In a few moments a familiar step is heard on the hall-stairs.

An elderly lady enters.

He rushes toward her, exclaiming, "Aunt!—dear aunt!"

The lady totters, glances wildly at him—staggers to a chair.

“Who are you?” she gasps.

“Don’t you know me, aunt?” the young sailor inquires, anxiously.

She looks at him as if distrustful of her senses; there is a tremor of the lips; she nervously passes her hands over her forehead, as if to clear her thoughts, and exclaims, “Tom! dear Tom!” and embraces him.

Yes, it was Tom; the missing, mourned-for dead Tom Jones.

Hasty explanations ensue.

His father, overburdened with grief, had retired from business, and gone to Europe for a change of air and scene, a fact of which Byrnes was ignorant, as he was not working that side of the case.

CHAPTER X.

TOM'S ADVENTURES.

TOM, after falling asleep on the memorable night of his disappearance from the cabin of the “Saucy Sal,” had been awakened towards day-break, by a recurrence of the bleeding at the nose, and not wishing to arouse his friends, had arisen from his bunk and staggered to the deck,

to the place where the blood spots had been noted.

Losing his balance, while leaning over the taffrail in an effort to keep the flowing blood from staining the deck and side, he fell overboard ; and being an expert swimmer, and not wishing to occasion alarm, he allowed himself to drop into the water when he found he was falling, without causing a "splash," by offering no resistance to the impetus—a trick he had learned in the gymnasium.

When he rose from the water he struck out for a short swim, aware that the invigoration of the bath would be good for him in his condition.

Enjoying the water and heedless under the influence of the liquor still controlling him, he swam further away from the craft than he thought, and got into the strong seaward current before he was aware of the fact ; a rip rap on the other side of the peninsula caused a variety of currents here, which was as strong and steady as diverse.

The current that caught the struggling swimmer, bore directly seaward, and was and still is the dread of the navigators of the coast, as it seems to be a combination or succession of whirlpools that pass their victim from one to another until they hurl him out upon the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean.

Tom's strength was not adequate in the

battle with the swift rushing waters that really seemed to leap in their joy at securing him.

He was hauled or tossed along, struggling to free himself from the intangible embrace of the whirlpool, as he did in his efforts to get back towards the craft, when he would summon his strength and call to his friends for assistance.

He knew now that he would only waste his energies if he exerted his voice in calling for help, and he wisely conserved his strength for the demands to be made yet upon him by the angry but gleeful waters.

The "Saucy Sal" receded rapidly from his vision though the day grew clearer every moment; and the shore line fast faded into obscurity until finally lost in the horizon of the blue sky.

Finally, quite exhausted and satisfied that further resistance was useless, he abandoned himself to his fate. He hastily removed his coat, which had become cumbersome, and turned on his back and floated with the current which now again became steady in its outward rush.

Fortunately the sea was quiet or rather placid—for the waves are never quiet in their ceaseless activity,—like a caged monster chafing under restraint and bidding defiance—and he rode the water like a chip afloat.

His experience as a swimmer served him now, and he reposed on the water refraining from

exertion, as he was beginning to feel quite exhausted.

Suddenly his hand clutched a floating timber—a light rafter, that had probably been lost at sea by some coaster-lumberman.

He seized the timber, and taking his handkerchief from his neck he managed by “treading” to tie it like a flag at one end; then again floating he placed the other end under his head, his weight bringing the white signal up several feet above the surface of the waves.

He clutched the submerged end with one hand while his other was wound round the timber above his head, which was thus comfortably pillowed, while the signal was kept overhead. You may think that a pole cannot be held this way by a man floating; but Tom’s skill and courage demonstrated it is possible.

He floated; he rode the waves.

His signal was sighted by a merchantman bound from Boston for Buenos Ayres.

He was within hailing distance but the gurgle of the swift rushing waters prevented his hearing the mate’s stentorian—

“Ship ahoy!”

Fortunately for him he shifted the position of his head on the timber or the mate might have concluded he was a corpse sent adrift, anchored to a signal,—and have proceeded on his way without further inquiry, with a sailor’s well-

known disinclination to have anything to do with a corpse.

The long boat was lowered without any disturbance of the ship's tack, and rowed towards him, the mate in charge.

"It's alive—a man," Tom heard a voice say, and then :—

"Steady now! You're all right!"

And a pair of strong arms grasped him, set adrift the timber, and hauled him into the boat, which was immediately pointed to the bark.

Tom was so much exhausted when lifted to the deck that he could not speak, but a glass of brandy restored him sufficiently to tell his story.

Had it now been night the light of Montauk Point could have been seen with the naked eye far astern on a port tack to leeward, while the two flashing orbs of the Neversink Highlands would have been discovered on the starboard quarter, and possibly, too, the Barnegat Light off the starboard bow; but now in the early morning light, with the rising sun just beginning to illumine the eastern horizon, these were not discernible except through the captain's glass; nothing was to be seen but waves all around, so far out at sea were they; all else was sky.

Of course communication with the shore was out of the question,—the ship could not turn from her course.

The captain told Tom that he would send him

ashore in the long boat at Montevideo, as he did not suppose he would care to remain on board the trip up the river to port Buenos Ayres, and that as he had only some small change in his pocket he must work his passage by assisting the cook as a waiter, as he did not think that he would be equal to deck work.

The captain agreed to signal and if possible, put him aboard the first homebound steamer or vessel they should meet.

The captain took a fancy to Tom and made him as comfortable as he could, while insisting as a matter of justice to the underwriters that he should work his passage.

Tom, while fully realizing his position and the anguish and sorrow of those he left behind in consequence of his mysterious and unaccountable disappearance, could not prevent his happy-go-lucky temperament from reasserting itself and deciding him that no good could come from worrying over what could not be helped, and he consequently made the best of circumstances to the degree that he really enjoyed the voyage.

Of course he never for a moment imagined the predicament his mysterious disappearance had entailed on his friends, but supposed they could account for his absence by the fact that he had fallen overboard and been carried to sea, and rescued as he had been.

Having been rescued the thought that he

might be mourned for as one dead never occurred to him, under the circumstances.

The idea that his comrades had been charged with his murder, arrested and tried would have driven him almost crazy.

For several days he hoped to sight some home-bound steamer or ship, but none came along on the expanse of sea in the captain's glass, which Tom always had to his eye in the daylight hours when that worthy was not using it.

One of the line of steamers at this time plying between Buenos Ayres and New York, passed in the night time off the Florida reef, and so was not signalled.

Favored by a smooth sea and propitious winds the good ship bowled along, day after day under a cloud of canvas.

Finally one morning they arrived at the mouth of the Platte River, off the town of Montevideo, which the captain told Tom was touched by Commodore Garrison's line of steamers to New York (since discontinued in consequence of the non-progressive policy of our government concerning commerce and shipping).

Tom decided he should like to be put ashore, and he was sent in the long boat.

During the voyage he had grown a beard an inch or more, and his hair, usually kept close trimmed, was now sufficiently long to be a curly mass all over his head, and he was as swarthy as

an Indian ; and the regular hours, healthy air and nourishing diet had increased his weight by twenty odd pounds.

No one but an intimate acquaintance, to whom the voice would have been familiar would have recognized him, as he stepped ashore on the quay, with his worldly effects in the traditional handkerchief bundle of the sailor ; and as the thought came to him*that he was a stranger in a strange land he was for the moment loth to leave his comrades, who had however, put back for the ship as soon as he jumped from the boat.

The quaint old town, at the mouth of one of the noblest rivers of the world, would ordinarily have promised many attractions for him ; but his only thought now was the hope to get away as soon as possible.

The first inquiry he made on landing was if there was telegraphic communication with New York, as he wished to inform his father and friends of his arrival as soon as possible ; but there was not, and he could consequently reach home as soon as a letter.

His joy was boundless when he learned that the steamer, at the wharf near by, just down from Buenos Ayres, would leave that very day for New York.

He secured passage on the steamer on telling his story and giving a draft on his father for the amount.

The agent directed his attention to the following placard conspicuously posted on the bulletin in the office :—

MISSING!

INFORMATION WANTED.

THOMAS JONES, of Brooklyn, L. I., N. Y., missing from the cat-boat "Saucy Sal," off Smith's Point, Connecticut, U. S. A., on the night of July 10th, 187—. Age, 22; five feet in height, slender and athletic; black hair, black eyes, black moustache. Beard of quick growth, showing blue on skin after shaving. Has a scar on scalp above right ear; large vaccination scar one inch long on left arm; little finger, left hand crooked from an injury. Disappeared from boat during night. Supposed to have fallen overboard. If remains discovered by some vessel communicate particulars to establish identity.

THOMAS BYRNES,
Detective Bureau,
Police Headquarters, N. Y. City.

MANQUE!

RENSEIGNEMENTS DESEREE.

ON demande des renseignements sive Thomas Jones, domicilié à Brooklyn, L. I., N. Y.,

disparu du voilier "Suncy Sal," au large de "Smith's Point," Connecticut, Etats Unis d'Amerique, pendant la nuit du 10 Juillet, 187-. Age 22 ans, hauteur 5 pieds, stature élancée et solide; cheveux noirs, yeux noirs, moustache noire. Barbe poussant rapidement laissant une ténacité bleue à la peau quand rasée de frais. A une cicatrice à la tête au-dessus de l'oreille gauche, grande marque de vaccin d'un ponce de long au bras gauche; le petit doigt de la main gauche est crochu à la suite d'une blessure. Disparu du bateau pendant la nuit, supposé être tombé à la mer. Si le corps est trouvé par quelque Cateau communiquez détails pour établir identité à

THOMAS BYRNES,

Bureau de la police secrète,

Depot central de la Police ou à la Préfecture de Police,

New York.

VERSCHWUNDEN.

AUSKUNFT WIRD ERBETEN UBER

THOMAS JONES aus Brooklyn und Long Island im Staate New York, wird vom Katschiff "Saucy Sal" aus Smith's Point im Staate Connecticut, Vereinigte Staaten von Nord Amerika, seit der Nacht von 10ten Juli, 187-, vermisst.

Alter zwei und zwanzig Jahre, Höhe fünf Fuss schlank und kräftig, Haar schwarz, Augen schwarz, Schnurrbart schwarz. Bart schnell

wachsend, leuchtet blau auf der Haut nach dem Rasiren. Er hat eine Narbe am Kopfe über dem rechten Ohr, eine grose Schramme, ungefähr ein Zoll lang, auf dem linken Arm von der Impfung, und der kleine Finger der linken Hand ist verkrüppelt von einer Verletzung. Er verschwand von dem Schiff während der Nacht, und nimmt man an dass er über Bord gefallen ist.

Wenn der Körper oder Kleidungsstücke, etc., von irgend einem Schiffe aufgefunden werden sollten, so bitte dies gefälligst sofort behufs Feststellung der Thatsachen hierher mitzutheilen.

THOMAS BYRNES,

Detective Bureau.

Polizei Hauptquartier, New York City.

The clerk, a native, in the office did not furnish him any further information, but the purser of the steamer, a New Yorker, told him all about reading in the papers the sensation his disappearance had caused, and swift as the steamer was, she was all too slow for him.

He counted the hours as they brought him nearer home, confident that the Providence which had favored him so far, would land him in time to rescue his friends from their peril, now more imminent than ever his own had been when he was at the mercy of the merciless and unsympathetic waves.

CHAPTER XI.

BYRNES' WORK.

BYRNES, after his investigations about the locale of the tragedy, advised the lawyers to prolong the trial as far as possible, as he was satisfied that time only would fathom the mystery attending the disappearance of the unfortunate young man, under such peculiar circumstances.

He returned to headquarters in New York City, to continue his part of the work, from the centripetal of the great web of the detective system.

His plan, if he can be said to have a plan when he facilely adapts himself to all circumstances or cases by applying his experience—his plan is to ascertain all the facts in a case and then formulate his theory, not to theorize (as so many do) on supposition or hypothesis or former experience ; to change his views if new facts come up to upset his ideas: but in no event ever to give up a prosecution until it is finished, however vexatious the delays or disappointing the clues ; although, because he is silent on the subject often his aids and clients think he has abandoned a case until he surprises them by action that unravels the mystery or brings to the bar of Justice the culprits. He has been known to work in silence and secrecy for years on a case. Napoleon did not evince more tenacity of purpose than he.

He did not believe that Moore and Bagley had murdered their friend, as all the facts indicated and as the majority of people believed, because in that event the body surely after a few days would have been found somewhere on the neighboring coast—washed ashore by the tides even if carried seaward by the current, or by the soundings taken in all directions if strapped to the missing anchor.

It is needless to say that the innocent and courageous bearing of the young men made no impression on him, for in his experience many of the most horrible tragedies had been committed by inexperienced persons who evinced the coolness and courage of injured innocence, while often the innocent person exhibits the signs of guilt in their alarm. The hardened criminal, with the knowledge and experience of the penalty of crime, is apt to be more demoralized on discovery than the novice yet to serve sentence.

Byrnes made diligent inquiries to ascertain if any debts or a *liason* might cause Tom to wish to disappear—the only significance the allusion to his disappearance in Tom's letter to his sweetheart had to him was the suggestion that the writer might be complicated some way with some other woman. No facts were elicited to establish this theory and it was abandoned.

Byrnes became convinced that no crime had been committed. His theory, which all the facts

bore out, was that Tom had fallen overboard and been carried out to sea by the current. Whether he had been picked up by some passing craft or succumbed to the fury of the waves, time could only tell.

He issued the placard which Tom had read at Montevideo, and had it sent to various ports, in all parts of the world.

He had subordinates located at the Quarantine Stations on Staten Island and Hell Gate, and every incoming craft was inspected; but when days and weeks passed without any information of the missing man he was almost ready to conclude that he had died on the sea from exhaustion. The case, under the circumstances, seemed to him almost hopeless, and it was inevitable that the young prisoners should be adjudged guilty, convicted by circumstantial evidence.

Suppose that we now follow Byrnes from the dock after letting Tom go on his way rejoicing.

He went immediately to Mr. Bagley's office and communicated the joyful intelligence to that gentleman of Tom's return.

"My theory was correct," he said to Mr. Bagley, "that the missing man would reappear."

Together they went to Mr. Jones's residence, reaching there soon after Tom himself.

As speedily as the electric wires can convey the

words the intelligence of Tom's return is sent to the prisoners; and the next train bears him and Bagley, senior, (who got Byrnes to communicate the joyful news to Moore), to the town; and Tom's appearance in *propria persona* late that night caused their release the next day. Already the outlines of the gallows had loomed up in the prison-yard, and in twenty-eight hours the sentence of the court would have been executed.

One morning, however, he was surprised and delighted—if one so characteristically imperturbable ever evinces any emotion—by receiving a telegram from his pal at the Quarantine Station and Staten Island that the “party” was aboard the steamer.

As we know he met him.

The story of Tom's return and the almost miraculous rescue of the condemned men from the gallows was as attractive to the reporters as that of his disappearance and their trial, and the papers for several days contained sensational accounts.

But one event, which now soon occurred, the parties contrived with Byrnes' assistance, to keep from the gossiping public. That—need I tell you?—was the marriage of Miss Depew and Tom, which was solemnized as soon as Tom's father could be brought back from Europe. And two of the stanchest and most devoted friends of the Inspector are Tom and his wife, who, living

in the interior of the state, never visit this city without paying their respects to the VIDOCQ OF NEW YORK in the marble edifice on Mulberry Street

THE END.

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